

Argentine workers rebel against capitalist collapse

State of siege decreed; troops open fire; 12 killed and 150 wounded

BY RÓGER CALERO AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

Working-class protests have exploded in cities across Argentina in face of unprecedented unemployment, plunging living standards, and moves by the government to take even more out of the hides of working people in order to pay U.S. banks and other international creditors.

In response, President Fernando de la Rúa declared a 30-day state of siege December 19, as cops fired rubber bullets and tear gas at crowds of workers protesting or breaking into supermarkets to get food and clothing in dozens of cities. At least 12 protest-

ers have been killed and 150 wounded.

A week earlier, the unions held a one-day general strike, shutting down the country.

Saddled with a \$132 billion foreign debt, the Argentine government is now bankrupt, unable to keep up with the never-ending interest payments demanded by imperialist creditors.

As it pleads with the International Monetary Fund for more loans to pay on old loans, the capitalist government's main solution has been to slash pensions and wages of state employees, raise taxes, impose a partial freeze on bank withdrawals, and send in the riot police when workers protest. Al-

ready hit by a de facto currency devaluation, working people face the ruinous prospect of "dollarization," the establishment of the U.S. dollar as the official currency.

The December 13 general strike, the seventh in the two years of the administration of Fernando de la Rúa, was a protest against the latest round of government austerity measures. Organized by the two wings of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), and the Argentine Workers Federation (CTA), it mobilized millions of workers in private industry and state employees.

The strike also involved a significant

Continued on Page 12

Socialists chart next steps in fight against imperialism's assault on working people

BY GREG McCARTAN AND MAURICE WILLIAMS

NEW YORK—"As the U.S. rulers accelerate the militarization of this country at the airports, ports, defense facilities, transportation hubs, and elsewhere, we defend workers' rights and join the fight to reinstate Michael Italie, fired from Goodwill Industries in Miami for statements he made opposing Washington's imperialist aggression against Afghanistan and in defense of the Cuban Revolution," said Jack Barnes to a meeting of 130 people here.

"As the Pentagon sets up POW camps and begins interrogations of prisoners outside Kandahar," he said, "we join with other anti-imperialist fighters and communists from around the world meeting in Athens, Greece, this coming week to discuss how to more effectively and rapidly respond to imperialism's accelerating assaults against working people the world over."

"Even as the imperialist powers send more and more soldiers to Afghanistan and elsewhere in Central Asia," Barnes said, "we work to make more efficient the production of revolutionary books and periodicals and find ways to make them more widely available to workers, farmers, and youth facing imperialism's onslaught around the world."

Barnes, the national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, was one of a panel of speakers December 15 at a meeting held in a large room being renovated in Pathfinder's printshop. Also speaking was SWP leader Norton Sandler, who had recently led a team of socialist workers and youth at the Guadalajara, Mexico, book fair. Sandler described the response to Pathfinder titles

Continued on Page 8

3,200 garment workers strike in Quebec



Militant/Sylvie Charbin
UNITE garment workers picket outside Samuelsohn plant. Strikers oppose miserly wage offer and proposals that discriminate against immigrant workers.

BY SYLVIE CHARBIN

MONTREAL—Chants of "So-so...solidarité" rang out in front of the Jack Victor garment plant on the morning of December 14, as women danced

in the street to Latin rhythms from a nearby car stereo. Cars honked their support of the strikers, as some 300 workers gathered in front of the downtown plant

Continued on Page 2

Pathfinder books for working people and youth fighting imperialism's militarization drive. Special offers, see page 5.

India threatens Pakistan, prepares to attack Kashmir independence groups

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Utilizing a December 13 attack by armed men on its parliament building, the government of India is threatening Pakistan and making plans to attack organizations fighting for the independence of Kashmir. The armed forces of both India and Pakistan, countries of a billion and 145 million people respectively, have been placed on alert. Both possess nuclear weapons, and came close

to using them on each other in 1990.

India's home minister, Lal Krishna Advani, claimed "the terrorists and their mentors across the border had the temerity to try to wipe out the entire political leadership of India." He held the Pakistani government responsible for the attack, adding that Muslim Pakistan "is unable to reconcile itself with the reality of a secular, demo-

Continued on Page 10

Miami event: 'Free Cuban revolutionaries imprisoned in U.S. jails'

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

MIAMI—Rallying to oppose the frame-up convictions of five Cubans by the U.S. government and the harsh sentences meted out to three of them by District Judge Joan Lenard this past week, 180 people met here December 16 to discuss the fight to free the Cuban patriots.

Speaking at the meeting was Irma Schwerert, mother of Rene González, who said her son was in the United States to gather information and report on the activities of right-wing forces in the United States that had a history of carrying out terrorist actions against Cuba. González was "capable of risking everything, without asking anything in return," she said.

In a case charged with slanders and attacks against the Cuban Revolution and that country's right to defend its sovereignty and people against U.S.-backed rightist forces, the five were convicted on charges ranging from "conspiracy to commit espionage" to "conspiracy to commit murder." Days earlier Lenard handed down the maximum sentence against three of the Cuban patriots. Gerardo Hernández received two consecutive life terms; Ramón Labaniño was sentenced to one life term; and Rene González received consecutive 10-year and a five-year sentences. Sentencing is scheduled to be completed on December 27.

Schwerert said she lived in Chicago in
Continued on Page 4

'Your battle is my battle,' says backer of fired worker

BY CHRIS HOEPPNER

MIAMI—"I want to express full support in your efforts to secure justice for what has happened to you. Those of us around the nation must stand united as we demand that our voices be heard loud and clear in the debate concerning the government's involvement in trampling First Amendment rights under the guise of national security," wrote Ahmad Daniels in support of Michael Italie's fight for reinstatement to his job at Goodwill Industries. "Your battle is my battle," he added.

Daniels heard about Italie's case in the course of winning support for a battle against his own firing. Formerly the director of the Mecklenburg County Office of Minority Affairs in North Carolina, he was dismissed for expressing his political views in a letter to a local newspaper.

Daniel's statement is one of a growing
Continued on Page 4

Our publishing schedule

This is a two-week issue of the *Militant*. Our next issue will be published and sent to distributors and subscribers January 3.

'It's about respect': garment workers in Montreal walk out

Continued from front page
after signing up for picket duty at the union hall. One popular sign read, "Merry Christmas, boss."

The day before, some 3,200 members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) from about 30 garment shops here—as well as outlying cities of Ste-Thérèse, Ste-Hyacinthe, and St. Césaire—had voted to reject for the second time a contract offer by the Men's Clothing Manufacturers Association (MCMA). The vote was close, with 1,473 voting against the offer and 1,386 voting for it.

In their first proposal the company had demanded a wage freeze in the first year of a 3-year contract, and only 20 cents an hour in each of the next two years. After this was rejected by the union membership, the MCMA offered a 10-cent raise in the first year, 15 cents in the second, and 20 cents the third.

"I was willing to go along with the first offer because of the economy," said Marta, a sewing machine operator who has worked at Jack Victor for over four years. "But when they came back with just five cents more, they touched my dignity. That woke me up. They treat us like we're ignorant. It's not just about money. It's about respect."

Workers this reporter met on the picket line in front of Golden Brand, the biggest shop in the bargaining unit with a workforce of 1,000, reported that as soon as copies of the second offer began to be distributed, a chorus of boos, shouts and whistles rang out, which lasted all day. Some workers threw nickels at their bosses.

In past contract fights, workers have been able to obtain a 25-cents-an-hour wage increase in each year of the 3-year contract. Many older workers who have been through previous struggles feel that this is a conquest that the union should not give up, especially since bosses have been able to boost production significantly in the last three years.

Another clause opposed by union members would allow the bosses to technically fire workers who extend their vacations without authorization and to rehire them as new workers.

Many workers view this clause as a trap, since many immigrant workers need to take extended vacation time to travel more cheaply to their country of origin during peak summer plant shutdowns.

In most shops, such authorizations are extended to only a select few workers. "We can't let the company fire workers or take away anyone's seniority. They will just use this clause to get rid of whomever they choose," said Rosa Andrade, another sewing machine operator.

The MCMA initially demanded that no minimum wage be written into the contract. However, the revised contract included minimum wage standards set in 1992 by Quebec government in the form of decrees regulating wages for 19,000 workers in the garment industry. These decrees had expired during negotiations but were recently extended with a wage freeze until June 2004. Most new hires are employed in general work, sewing, or pressing.

The decrees set minimum wages in these job categories of Can\$7.00 to \$8.40 (Can\$1.00 = US63 cents.) The contract sets the lowest wage category at \$7.25.

According to government figures, 84 percent of production jobs in this industry are

held by women, the majority of whom are immigrants.

At the last contract negotiations in 1998, the MCMA collapsed under the pressure of growing competition in the industry and the determination of UNITE members. The bosses had to withdraw several concessions

demands, including lower wages for new hires.

Sylvie Charbin is a sewing machine operator and a member of UNITE on strike at Jack Victor. Nathan Cecchin, a presser at the same shop, contributed to this article.

Sinn Fein leader visits Cuba



Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams meets Cuban president Fidel Castro. In his visit to Havana, Adams participated in a December 18 ceremony to unveil monument to 10 Irish hunger strikers who died 20 years ago in a British prison. The republican leader recalled the solidarity extended by Cuba during the hunger strike.

Atlanta event welcomes new Pathfinder bookstore

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

ATLANTA—It was standing room only when almost 50 people attended the grand opening celebration of the new Pathfinder bookstore on the city's southwest side on December 1. The feature presentation of the celebration was a talk by Ma'mud Shirvani, the Farsi language editor of Pathfinder Press, on "The War Against Afghanistan and the Struggle Against Imperialism Today."

Participants were welcomed by Amanda Ulman, a textile worker, who thanked supporters of the bookstore for their efforts to renovate the premises.

Maria Moncada, who attends weekly Militant Labor Forums here, welcomed ev-

eryone to the bookstore. "As we say in my country, 'my house is your house.' That is what we are saying with the bookstore. That you are welcome here."

Moncada is currently reading the Spanish-language edition of *Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq* by Jack Barnes. "The lessons of this book seem very relevant today. Pathfinder books explain not just what you should be against, but what we should be for. They offer a revolutionary perspective."

The grand opening was combined with activities to get out the word on the fight of Mike Italie, who is waging a nationwide campaign to demand reinstatement to his job at Goodwill Industries where he worked as a sewing machine operator (see article on front page).

Willie Head, a vegetable farmer and leader of the Peoples Tribunal, an organization of rural workers and farmers, came to the meeting after having addressed a New Order event earlier in the day.

March against police brutality

New Order, an anti-racial profiling organization in Marietta, Georgia, held the first ever march against police harassment in Cobb County, Georgia, October 20. The group is planning another march February 23.

Head had explained in his presentation to the group that defense cases like Italie's and the fight by Valdosta State University

instructor Leigh Touchton, who is demanding her job back after being fired for speaking out on campus and in the community, are important ways to oppose the war on working people—a war that is intensifying as the U.S. government presses its assault against the people of Afghanistan. He invited members of New Order to attend a meeting of the Peoples Tribunal, founded in a fight against police brutality in 1999.

Eight members of the group traveled with Head to Atlanta to attend the bookstore grand opening. Many of the youth picked up a range of Pathfinder titles from a sale table, and in subsequent phone discussions have said that they are enjoying reading them.

"This bookstore is very important to me because it's how we workers can know what is going on with other workers. We are the ones who produce the wealth of any country," Heriberto Ruiz told the crowd at the bookstore opening. Ruiz, a worker from Mexico who now lives near the bookstore, met socialist workers staffing a book table with Pathfinder literature in the surrounding working-class district that includes several trailer parks where hundreds of immigrant construction workers live.

"Participating in the meeting tonight opens doors for me," he said at a social after the grand opening. "I am beginning to understand that it's not just Mexicans who face the problems we do, but Black workers and white workers. We're all the same."

The Militant

Vol. 66/No. 1
Closing news date: December 19, 2001

Editor: MARTIN KOPPEL
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Published weekly except for one week in June, August and December.
The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Telephone: (212) 243-6392; Fax (212) 924-6040.

E-mail: TheMilitant@compuserve.com

The Militant website is: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to The Militant Business Office, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Militant, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Subscriptions: United States: for one-year subscription send \$45 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: for one-year subscription send \$65, drawn on a U.S. bank, to

above address. By first-class (airmail), send \$80. Asia: send \$80 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

Canada: Send Canadian \$75 for one-year subscription to Militant, 4613 St. Laurent, Montreal, Quebec H2T 1R2.

Britain, Ireland: £36 for one year by check or international money order made out to Militant Distribution, 47 The Cut, London, SE1 8LL, England. Continental Europe, Africa, Middle East: £40 for one year by check or international money order made out to Militant Distribution at above address.

France: Send FF420 for one-year subscription to Militant, Centre MBE 175, 23 rue Lecourbe, 75015 Paris; chèque postale: 40 134 34 U.

Iceland: Send 6,500 Icelandic kronur for one-year subscription to Militant, P.O. Box 233, 121 Reykjavik. Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark: 550 Swedish kronor for one year. Pay to Militant Swedish giro no. 451-32-09-9.

New Zealand: Send New Zealand \$90 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand. Australia: Send Australian \$90 to P.O. Box K879, Haymarket, NSW 1240, Australia. Pacific Islands: Send New Zealand \$90 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand.

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151 days—the 1951 waterfront struggle in New Zealand

50 years ago, militant workers resisted rulers' drive to war and austerity

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the 1951 waterfront lockout in New Zealand. From February 19 to July 16 of that year, the National Party government put the country on a virtual war footing, mobilizing the armed forces and police, the media, and other resources in an offensive against the Waterside Workers Union (WWU) and other industrial unions, aiming to break them up, and demoralize the tens of thousands of working people who looked to them for leadership.

The capitalists had been preparing for the onslaught for some time. Seizing on the watersiders' reputation for militancy and readiness to take strike action when needed, they vilified the workers as "lazy wharfies" and red-baited their leadership as part of a more general witch-hunting offensive. More than one cartoonist boosted their careers fostering this caricature of the workers.

The immediate prologue to the lockout was an attack led by the Labour Party government on the Carpenters Union. In 1949, in the middle of a dispute in which the carpenters had won widespread solidarity, the government deregistered their union and encouraged the formation of a scab outfit. The top leaders of the Federation of Labour (FOL), the national union federation, gave the attack their support. Labour ministers justified their action by describing the affair as a "communist plot."

In the wake of that setback for the labor movement, the FOL leaders split the federation around a government-supported demand that the watersiders leave the World Federation of Trade Unions—dubbed the

occupied a strategic place in a capitalist economy heavily dependent on seaborne trade. Until the impact of the introduction of containers beginning three decades ago, their unions were also numerically a substantial part of the labor movement. Before, during, and after the war, the watersiders engaged in running battles with the shipowners over wages and hours, hiring procedures, and questions of safety. They were quick to lend solidarity to other unions involved in disputes.

The union also helped to lead a campaign against the introduction of peacetime conscription and opposed aspects of the government's preparation for new wars, including its commitment of forces to the brutal 1950–53 U.S.-led assault on Korea and British aggression in Malaya. "Not a son or a gun for Malaya" ran a slogan publicized by the union's monthly newspaper, the *Transport Worker*.

The National government and the shipowners seized on the issue of wages to launch their offensive, granting the WWU a 9 percent wage hike compared to 15 percent national awarded to other unions on Jan. 31, 1951. When the union responded by clamping a ban on overtime, the shipowners reacted quickly, closing the gates on February 19 and beginning the lockout. Two days later Prime Minister Holland declared a state of emergency. Shortly after, troops began to load and unload ships.

"Any individual or group of individuals who stand in the way of, or limit the country's preparations for defense...is a traitor to the country and should be treated accordingly," said Holland. His government's emergency regulations were based on the Public Safety Act passed in 1932 after unemployed workers had defended themselves from rampaging cops in the streets of Auckland; they also bore many parallels to "special" measures imposed in World War II.

The regulations relieved the prime minister of any obligation to call parliament together, and allowed the executive to override any other legislation and suppress all civil liberties. The government was empowered to take over union funds and suspend awards, or contracts, as it did immediately to the watersiders. Rank-and-file police officers were given powers of arrest without a warrant, while their superiors enjoyed unrestricted right of entry and the authority to prohibit meetings and marches.

For workers, an "offense," among other things, meant printing or publishing anything that was likely to encourage a strike, and insulting a person for continuing to work—i.e., calling them a "scab." Jail terms and stiff fines were stipulated for those who transgressed. Overnight it became a crime to donate food to the workers' families. This provision was often less strictly enforced, however, given the government's fear of touching off a wider explosion.

The response of many workers to the rulers' offensive, and particularly this broadside against fundamental political rights, was immediate. Encouraged by watersiders, who spoke at a number of union meetings, some 12,000 miners, freezing workers, railway workers, seafarers, and others downed tools rather than handle scab goods or work alongside military labor.

Proletarian social movement

Denied a legal platform, the WWU and its supporters produced millions of illegal leaflets, putting forward their side of the story. National WWU leaders Jock Barnes and Toby Hill spoke at public meetings involving tens of thousands of people. A May



Watersiders in Wellington vote to fight against lockout. Union cards issued at end of dispute listed "seamen, freezing workers, miners, Australian and Pacific Coast workers" as among those who "stood loyal right through."

speaking tour attracted a total audience of 35,000 people around the country.

The watersiders led a march to publicize one such meeting planned for June 3 in a central Auckland park. Baton-charged by the police, many marchers were hospitalized; nevertheless, the meeting went ahead and drew a crowd of 17,000 people.

Efforts by the locked-out watersiders and the striking workers to disseminate the truth of the struggle in defiance of the regulations, and by workers, farmers, and others across the country to provide solidarity and aid to the families of striking and locked-out workers, took on the characteristics of a social movement. Backyard butchers and distribution centers were established. Many working farmers, from market gardeners in Auckland to beef and sheep farmers elsewhere, donated food to the relief centers organized by watersiders' wives and others.

At the same time, this social movement had an underground character, given the sweeping character of the regulations, the widespread police surveillance, and the frequent presence of the armed forces near workers' mobilizations.

The Labour Party, whose leader, Walter Nash, opposed some of the gag laws but declared himself "neither for the waterside workers or against them," was deeply divided by the dispute. The entire country of less than 2 million people, mostly located on two large islands, was transfixed and polarized by the struggle. For at least three decades afterward, people would still talk about "where they stood" in 1951, and assess acquaintances and family members by the position they had taken.

Port unions in Canada, Britain, and the United States organized financial solidarity and industrial protest action in support of the embattled workers. In neighboring Australia, waterfront workers donated up to \$100,000 in the course of the dispute. After the Australian Waterside Workers Federation slapped a black ban in May on ships loaded by troops or nonunion labor in New Zealand, the Australian government organized soldiers and scabs to load ships in a number of ports, threatened to deregister the union, and charged its national leader under the Crimes Act with interfering with overseas trade. Union leaders called off the ban.

From 1950 onwards Canberra had prepared "Operation Alien," a plan to employ troops on the docks and mines in the event of strike action against the Communist Party Dissolution Bill—legislation that was shelved after its principal proposal was defeated in a 1951 referendum. (See "Australia in 1951: Lessons for fight against antilabor witch-hunt" in Dec. 24, 2001, *Militant*.)

Labour officials side with government

In contrast to this widespread solidarity, the Federation of Labour officials called for the watersiders to accept compulsory arbitration, and ordered striking unionists to return to work. The vehemence of the red-baiting rhetoric of FOL leaders like Fintan Patrick Walsh rivaled that of the most reactionary politicians. Opponents of the conciliation and arbitration system, they said—meaning the watersiders and their allies—"can be successful only if they overthrow the government by a revolutionary conspiracy." They added that the attack on the watersiders was "part of a war that New Zealand troops are fighting in Korea."

On April 24 an FOL conference announced that the federation would take no action against the emergency regulations. The federation officials' maneuvers and pressure on miners—including maneuvers behind the back of elected leaders—freezing workers, and others eventually started to bring results. As the struggle became a war of attrition, the government's attempts to break watersiders away from their union had some results, particularly in more isolated ports. At the same time, progress was being made in constructing the scab union. Eventually fewer than 10 percent of WWU members crossed the picket line.

Confronted by these lengthening odds, the National Strike Council formed by striking unions called for a return to work in late June. WWU leaders declared they were prepared to negotiate, and announced they would accept the government's conditions. At each stage of the negotiations, however, the government added new demands, finally insisting the union be broken up and its leadership replaced.

When the watersiders returned to work on July 16 their union was fragmented into 26 port unions. Other militant unions suffered a similar fate. The Wellington freezing workers, who had led the union's national strike, were divided into 12 shed unions, and the Wellington Drivers Union was broken into six districts. With large-scale victimization on the wharves, only 4 percent of the new waterfront union in Auckland were veterans of the old union. Signs outside factories had read "Watersiders need not apply" during the dispute, and the same policy applied in many plants after July 16. Jock Barnes, jailed for two months for defaming a policeman, was never able to get hired on the wharves again.

Seeking to capitalize on its victory, the National Party called a snap election and kept the emergency regulations in place almost until the day of the vote. Labour's vote disintegrated, and National won with an increased majority.

Rulers' victory was hard-won

The defeat of the watersiders and other militant unions brought the country's post-war upturn in union struggles to a sharp end. The rulers succeeded to a large extent in atomizing the most militant layers of the labor movement that had been forged in union struggles of the mid to late '40s and that were linked to earlier struggles, including in the depression.

The rulers' victory did not come easily, however. Although the workers were finally forced to relent before the government and employer offensive, they and their legions of supporters waged an impressive 151-day rearguard struggle. Their resistance made the confrontation an important landmark for revolutionary-minded working people and youth to both honor and learn from.

In particular, these workers' story gives working people and youth of today an insight into the potential power of the industrial unions and the capacity of the working class to draw other social layers behind it in struggle; it also helps us learn about the limitations of militant syndicalist leaders like those who headed the WWU in 1951.

A discussion of these points and of the international context of the 1951 lockout will be the subject of an article in a subsequent issue of the *Militant*.



Women led June 1, 1951, march to publicize meeting that drew 17,000 people. Police attacked march with batons.

"voice of Moscow" by reactionary politicians from Washington to Wellington.

The same year, Labour ministers rammed through a "yes" vote in a referendum to establish peacetime conscription—a demonstrative sign of the rulers' preparation for new wars, four years after the end of World War II. The measure helped to alienate the union-conscious workers who were the core of the party's active base and electoral support. In the subsequent election the National party, representing big business in New Zealand, won a majority. The new prime minister, Sidney Holland, stepped up the red-baiting and antiunion propaganda that had marked his election campaign.

The showdown is prepared

The stage was set for what shipping company representative Keith Belford described in November 1950 as a "showdown" with the "waterside workers and some allied unions." Speaking at a hearing of a royal commission on the waterfront, Belford advocated the adoption of antiunion legislation modeled on the U.S. Taft-Hartley Act and the Australian Crimes Act. "I don't want it to be thought that I welcome such a [showdown], I would much rather see a change in the union leadership," he stated.

The watersiders, along with freezing workers, miners, and a few other industrial unions, had earned both the fear and hatred of the capitalist class. Waterside workers

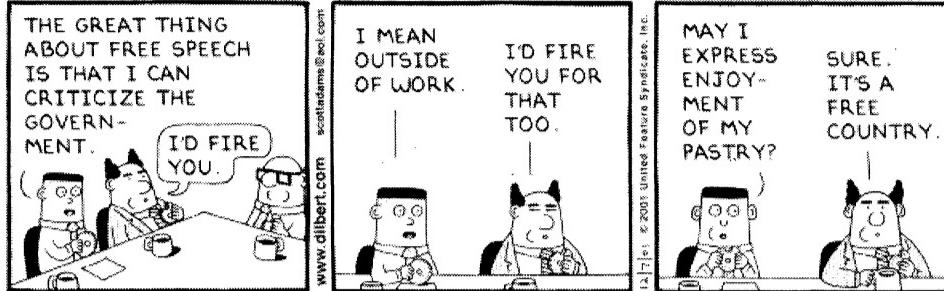
'Your battle is my battle' to overturn firing

Continued from front page

number issued by people who are demanding that Italie be rehired by Goodwill, and who express solidarity with the socialist garment worker's fight against his October 22 political firing.

After speaking out as the Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Miami against

who see freedom of speech as essential in our struggles to defend our living conditions and our right to organize strong unions free of company and government interference. Freedom of speech is an empty shell when a worker who runs for office can be fired by the employer if he or she doesn't say what the boss wants.



the U.S. war on Afghanistan and in defense of the Cuban Revolution during a televised candidates debate, Italie was called into the bosses' office at Goodwill Industries of South Florida and discharged because of his "views of the U.S. government."

The company has never disputed the political character of the dismissal. In a statement published in the October 30 *Miami Herald*, Goodwill CEO Dennis Pastrana said that he fired Italie because "we cannot have anyone who is attempting to subvert the United States of America" work at the plant.

Rodrick Colbert, a board member of the American Civil Liberties Union of Florida, Greater Tampa Bay chapter, and the assistant coordinator of the Tampa Bay Amnesty International chapter, said in a message that "all Americans should be horrified that anyone exercising this sacred privilege should suffer from reprisals, be they from a government entity or a private business."

"In the future," said Colbert, "I hope that freedom of expression protection can be afforded to employees of the private sector through legislation. In the interim, it is my hope that Goodwill Industries will live up to its eponym and reinstate Mike Italie."

First amendment rights violated

In a message backing Italie's fight, Margaret Becker, who is speaking around the country in defense of five Cubans framed up and jailed by the U.S. government, said that there is a "gravely troubling climate surfacing in our midst where people are marginalized, fired, or even prosecuted for expressing their beliefs, a cherished right protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Further evidence of this climate can be seen in the executive branch linking with the judiciary to operate in secret to discredit, vilify, and frame those with whom they or their bedfellows disagree."

In the case of the Miami 5, wrote Becker, whose companion is one of the framed-up Cuban patriots, the "Cubans' homes were secretly raided." They were then "arrested, thrown into solitary confinement arbitrarily, and incarcerated more than two years prior to a trial. Their activities comprised communicating solely open source material in an attempt to thwart terrorism stemming from well-known political and paramilitary groups who operate with impunity from U.S. soil, groups which advocate and initiate violence against the sovereign nation of Cuba."

In an interview this week with the *Militant*, Italie said, "Goodwill has thrown down the gauntlet to working people and all those

"The support I have gained shows that when you fight you will find other working people who will stand together."

The Committee to Defend Freedom of Speech and the Bill of Rights has been formed to win support for Italie's fight and

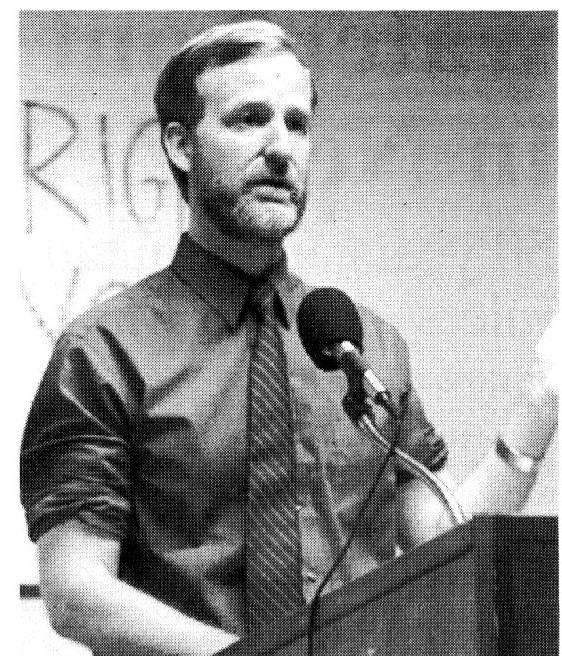
has organized a national speaking tour.

Italie has already visited Los Angeles and New York City, and has received invitations to speak in Houston; Valdosta, Georgia; and Charlotte, North Carolina.

The Committee to Defend Freedom of Speech is seeking help from law students, attorneys, and professors who can take time over the next few weeks to aid in researching case law regarding the First Amendment, civil rights, and employment violations.

The committee is also seeking help in putting up a web site where information on the firing and statements of support can be posted for everyone's use.

For more information or to offer assistance in this fight, contact the Committee to Defend Freedom of Speech and the Bill of Rights at P.O. Box 510127, Miami, FL, 33151-0127. Tel: (305) 724-5965. E-mail: DefendFreeSpeech@yahoo.com.



Militant Michael Italie speaks at November rally in Los Angeles to win support for his fight against political firing by Miami garment factory boss.

'Free Cuban revolutionaries in U.S. jails'

Continued from front page

the 1950s, where she participated in union-organizing efforts. "In the years I spent in the United States I came to know many Americans," she said, "and I know our sons would never do anything to harm the American people. They are innocent!"

She was joined at the event by Carmen Nardello, the mother of Gerardo Hernández; Magali Llort, mother of Fernando González; Irma González, older daughter of Rene González; and Mirta Rodriguez, mother of Antonio Guerrero. All traveled from Cuba for the sentencing hearings. The five imprisoned Cubans are now known as the Miami Five.

Andres Gómez of the Antonio Maceo Brigade chaired the program. "We demand the immediate release of the five Cuban patriots," he said, speaking under a banner reading, "Against Terrorism! Freedom for the Five!"

Gómez pointed to the more than 40-year war against Cuba sponsored by the U.S. government, including a military invasion, plane hijackings, biological warfare, and attempted assassinations. He said supporters of the five should have a long-term perspective in this fight, noting that in 1978 "we held a demonstration in an African-American neighborhood in Miami to free Nelson Mandela, and some in the community asked us 'Who is Nelson Mandela?' We were soon able to win thousands of people to understand who Nelson Mandela was" in the continuing fight against apartheid in South Africa.

Luis Miranda of Casa de las Americas in New York recounted some of the history of the fight against Washington's assault on the Cuban Revolution. He explained that in the 1960s and 1970s he was part of the "Fair Play for Cuba Committee, a broad organization, involving people of many views," demonstrating that "the North American people are not alien" to struggles to end the U.S. embargo of Cuba and the case of the Miami Five.

The event, covered by TV channels 23 and 51 in Miami, was sponsored by the Antonio Maceo Brigade; Alianza Martiana;

Alliance of Workers of the Cuban Community; Casa de las Americas in New York; the Cuban-American Coalition; the Cuban-American Defense League; Rescate Cultural Afro-Cubano; the Miami Coalition to End the U.S. Embargo of Cuba; and the International Action Center.

Max Leznick spoke for the Alianza Martiana, explaining that "the Cuban people have suffered for years from the destabilization campaign towards Cuba sponsored and financed by the United States." He pointed to the hypocrisy of the Bush administration's claims to be fighting terrorism in the Middle East, while putting in prison the Miami Five "who have done nothing but protect their country against terrorism" originating in the United States.

Frame-up convictions

In 1998, the FBI announced with much fanfare and media hype that it had discovered a "Cuban spy network" in Florida. Those arrested were charged with trying to "infiltrate" the U.S. Southern Command, passing U.S. "military secrets" to Havana, and "infiltrating" and "disrupting" right-wing Cuban-American groups in Miami that seek to overthrow the revolutionary government of Cuba. The charge of "conspiracy to commit murder" was tacked on later.

This past October the FBI also arrested and jailed Ana Belen Montes, a senior analyst for the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency, for allegedly providing classified information to the Cuban government. As with those arrested in Florida, FBI break-ins into Montes's apartment and electronic eavesdropping are also featured in government actions against her.

On June 8, a jury in a federal courtroom here handed down guilty verdicts against the five men on all 23 charges of "spying" for the government of Cuba. Hernández was found guilty of the unprecedented charge of "conspiracy to commit murder" for allegedly providing Cuban authorities with flight plans of the four Brothers to the Rescue pilots whose planes were shot down in 1996. A number of defense witnesses offered ample evidence that these rightists repeatedly violated Cuban airspace and refused to heed warnings to head back before they were downed near Havana.

Argiris Malapanis, speaking for the Miami Coalition to End the U.S. Embargo of Cuba, told the December 16 event that the arrests and convictions of the five "constituted an attack directed not only at revolutionary Cuba but at democratic rights in the United States. FBI agents broke into their homes repeatedly over the three years prior to the arrests, violating the Fourth Amendment protection against arbitrary search and seizure.

The prosecution's "evidence" consisted of information the FBI claimed to have collected in these raids, and from short-wave radio transmissions governments asserted they intercepted between Havana and the defendants. No evidence of any military secrets being stolen from the United States and turned over to Cuba was ever presented.

As with Washington's attacks on work-

ers' rights under the guise of fighting terrorism since September 11, the U.S. rulers used the "spy scare" case against the Cubans as a means to justify broader powers for the FBI, break-ins and electronic eavesdropping, frame-up trials on scanty evidence, and harsh prison conditions, such as extended solitary confinement solely based on the character of the charges against the defendants.

Malapanis added that prosecuting attorney Caroline Miller charged that Cuban president Fidel Castro should have been indicted as well, when she paraphrased Castro saying during his state visit to Iran earlier in the year that "together Cuba and Iran can bring the United States down."

Shah of imperialism will fall

This means supporters of the Miami Five "have to talk about the broader political context," said Malapanis. He quoted Castro who told an enthusiastic audience at the University of Tehran, "You were able to overthrow the biggest gendarme in the region not with guns, but with your ideas, culture, and patriotism. One shah still remains in the world. That is the shah of imperialism, which is entrenched near my homeland. It is an exploiting shah that wants to impose its system on the entire world and drag it into oppression. But as the shah of Iran was overthrown, this shah too will fall!"

Speaking for the National Committee to Free the Five Cuban Political Prisoners Held in U.S. Prison, Gloria La Riva told the Miami event that since the Cuban Revolution 43 years ago Washington "has used many tactics, but they've always depended on terrorism. They use it against the people of Cuba, and to silence people in Miami." The Committee and local affiliated groups are publicizing the case, and have held public meetings in Los Angeles and New York.

Michael Italie, former Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Miami who was fired from his job after appearing on a televised debate, also expressed his solidarity with the struggle to free the Miami Five. He noted that on December 13 the prosecuting attorney called on the judge to "incapacitate" Rene González by giving him the maximum sentence. Pointing out that this is Washington's goal in attacking workers' rights and defenders of the Cuban Revolution, Italie concluded, "These compañeros will not be 'incapacitated.' And we will not be 'incapacitated' in our struggle to free the Miami Five."

Maggie Becker read from a book of poems by Antonio Guerrero, her companion, expressing his "open heart and optimism." She reported that after attending the trials "my security as a citizen has been shredded by the impossibility of justice in this case." The judge had twisted the wording of Guerrero's letters, said Becker, in order to make it appear as if he were seeking "top secret" government documents. The conduct of the prosecuting attorney and judge convinced her that she had witnessed the "construction of a judicial lie" resulting in convictions and life sentences "that should affect every citizen of this country."

Message from UFCW representative in Minnesota

December 12, 2001

Mayor Joseph Carollo
Miami, FL 33133
Dear Mayor Carollo:

I was appalled to hear of the termination of Mr. Michael Italie from his position at Goodwill Industries. Of most concern is the reasons given for his termination. It was not for poor work performance or a poor attitude at the workplace, but for his views expressed as a candidate for public office in Miami.

I do not agree with Mr. Italie's position regarding his opposition to the United States policy in either Afghanistan or Cuba. In addition, I disagree with much of the stated policies of the Socialist Workers Party. However, to deprive one's ability to provide for himself and family by taking away his job is simply not right.

As a candidate for mayor, I believe it was

his duty to make known his views on any and all issues discussed. It would have been dishonest for him to withhold his views and say the "right" things in an attempt to win support. The democratic process is for voters to hear the views of all candidates and judge which candidate most closely mirror their views. In this case, the obvious method to stop him would be not to vote for him and encourage others to do the same.

In reality, his boss Mr. Pastrana appears to be displaying his personal displeasure of Mr. Italie's views and with his power of being boss, decided to deliver his own punishment on someone whose views he didn't like. Again, the more effective means of stopping Mr. Italie was not to terminate him, but simply not vote for him.

Sincerely,
Howard Kern, Union Representative
UFCW Local 789, St. Paul, Minnesota

WTC builders' greed responsible for massive death toll

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEW YORK—In a Pentagon transcript of a videotaped discussion involving Osama bin Laden and others in the al-Qaeda organization released December 13, bin Laden expressed surprise at the collapse of the World Trade Center towers in New York on September 11.

"We calculated that the floors that would be hit would be three or four floors. I was the most optimistic of them all," he is reported to have said. "Due to my experience in this field, I was thinking that the fire from the gas in the plane would melt the iron structure of the building and collapse the area where the plane hit and all the floors above it only. That is all we hoped for."

The twin towers are the first steel-reinforced skyscrapers to have ever collapsed in a fire.

Why did the World Trade Center collapse when its builders claimed it could withstand the impact of a Boeing 707? Were hundreds of firemen sent to their deaths due to lack of information on the punishment the buildings could take? Was the capitalist profit drive reflected in the design of the buildings, and does it provide an explanation for the massive death toll that resulted from the complete destruction of the towers on September 11 after hijacked 767 jet airplanes smashed into each one of them?

Three months after the destruction of the World Trade Center buildings new facts are emerging on these questions, in part prompted by bin Laden's observations.

Officials with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the longtime owner of the buildings, have insisted that the two 110-story structures came apart because of the intense fire generated by burning jet fuel.

However, a growing discussion and debate points to different explanations. Frederick Mowrer, an associate professor in the fire protection engineering department at the University of Maryland and an expert in the field, said that burning jet fuel may not have been the decisive factor in the twin towers' collapse, since much of this fuel blew out of the buildings and burned off quickly.

Instead, he and others point to the lack of adequate fireproofing as the reason the structural steel became so hot, causing it to give way. Once the floors around the impact area were destroyed, the top of each building fell, collapsing the floors underneath it like a deck of cards.

But before undertaking further exploration of the lack of fireproofing, the basic design of the twin towers is itself of interest. Media reports often describe it as "innovative," "unusual," or a "technological breakthrough." They point out that far from being a solid steel structure, the towers more resembled 110 stories of spider webs surrounding a tree branch.

Unusual construction

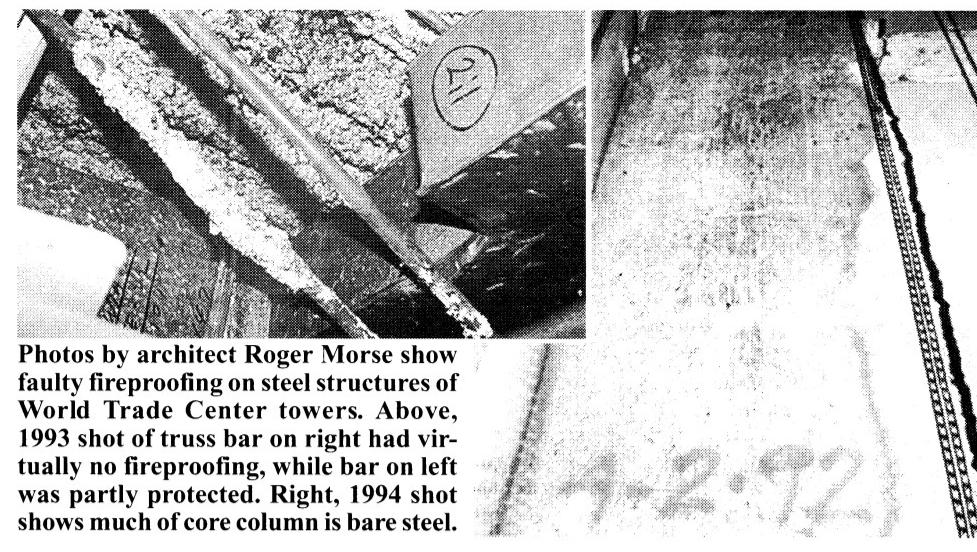
A September 17 article by The Society for New York City History entitled, "How Could the World Trade Center Collapse So Quickly?" says that part of the answer "may lie in the buildings' unusual construction, which is very different from the steel frame construction of most high-rise buildings."

The trade center was comprised of a reinforced concrete "central core" and, around the outside of the structure, 19-inch-wide steel columns spaced 22 inches apart. Steel trusses, only 33 inches wide, spanned the 60 feet between the core and the small steel columns. A fact sheet from the University of Sydney Department of Civil Engineering says the trusses "support the concrete slab of each floor and tie the perimeter columns to the core, preventing the columns from buckling outwards."

The Sydney document says that the "structural integrity of the World Trade Center depends on the closely-spaced columns around the perimeter." High temperatures from the fire "caused a failure of the truss system supporting a floor, or the remaining perimeter columns, or even the internal core, or some combination."

Constructing a tall building in this manner, various articles point out, is not only less expensive for the builders but allows the greatest possible square footage of leaseable space—a virtual gold mine in lower Manhattan. There were no columns cutting into the floors to be rented, making the total prime office space available equal to 7.9 million square feet, or about 50 city blocks. Upper floors had as much as 40,000 square feet of office space.

In a BBC news dispatch, John Knapton, professor of structural engineering at Newcastle University in the United Kingdom, said that the collapse of the buildings was predictable. Given what was widely known about the structure of the buildings, Knapton said the firemen and rescue workers "should not have gone in at all," or for



Photos by architect Roger Morse show faulty fireproofing on steel structures of World Trade Center towers. Above, 1993 shot of truss bar on right had virtually no fireproofing, while bar on left was partly protected. Right, 1994 shot shows much of core column is bare steel.

an hour at the most. "You would have thought someone with technical expertise would have been advising them," he said.

The lack of such advice or information about the vulnerability of the buildings is the subject of a growing number of questions by relatives of those killed when the buildings collapsed.

Long history of fireproofing problems

True to the Big Apple, the history of fireproofing at the World Trade Center begins with companies saving a buck and cutting corners, includes a mob-connected construction firm whose owner was later gunned down, and is the subject of numerous lawsuits, government investigations, and ongoing "inspections."

Fireproofing in modern steel-reinforced buildings is a mixture of mineral fibers and concrete-like materials called binders. The mixture is sprayed onto columns and beams, where it dries and sticks. If a fire breaks out, the fireproofing insulates the steel to prevent it from heating to the point at which it becomes soft and unable to support the weight above.

At a December 12 conference held at New York University, Mowrer said that fireproofing applied to everything at the twin towers—from structural columns to floor trusses to bolted connections—had peeled off or was inadequately installed over extensive parts of the building, and that at the very least this safety violation would have sped up the pace of the collapse.

"There may be issues related to the condition of the buildings before September 11 that need to be factored into the analysis" of why they collapsed, he said. Along with several other scientists, Mowrer is being financed by the National Science Foundation to study the disaster. "It seems as if the fireproofing was not up to what it should have been," he said.

Among the evidence cited is an extensive archive of some 1,200 photographs of scores of floors in the World Trade Center buildings taken by architect Roger Morse between

1986 and 2000. The photographs show that large areas of fireproofing are missing from core columns and that much of it was applied improperly to rusty steel. Morse took the pictures in his capacity as a consultant to the manufacturer of the spray-on fireproofing. His photos show that stretches of the tube-like structural steel supporting the trusses have no fireproofing and other areas had an extremely thin coating.

The New York and New Jersey Port Authority reacted sharply to the findings, insisting that whenever damaged fireproofing was discovered in regular inspections it was repaired. But even officials there acknowledged that problems with maintaining the fireproofing have plagued the structures for years.

Alan Reiss, a Port Authority official since 1984 who became director of the department in charge of day-to-day operations of the trade towers, admitted that engineers had been aware of difficulties in keeping the fireproofing on the structural columns in the core of the building around elevator shafts.

DiBono and Gambino

The company first contracted to apply fireproofing material was run by Louis DiBono, reputed to be a member of the Gambino crime family. According to Morse, DiBono's firm had improperly sprayed the fireproofing onto rusted steel, which would have caused it to slough off.

The first fireproofing material applied by the company, starting in 1969, contained asbestos. This caused a stir, and city officials ordered the application of a new material. DiBono's firm got the contract to remove the asbestos mix. The manner in which DiBono obtained this work was one matter examined in a criminal investigation into Port Authority construction contracting, although no charges were ever filed against him. In 1990 DiBono was gunned down on the orders of mafia boss John Gotti.

In a December 4 *New York Times* article titled "Wounded Buildings Offer Survival Lessons," James Glanz drew a comparison between what happened to two tall buildings engulfed in fire after being hit by debris from the twin towers. One was the 47-story skyscraper at 7 World Trade Center, which collapsed, and the other was a 1907 landmark at 90 West Street, which survived even though it was completely gutted.

In comparison to the skimpy fireproofing done on the 7 World Trade Center building, which was completed in 1987, Glanz described the extensive fireproofing system put in place at the 1907 high rise. "Most of the dozens of steel columns holding up the building were encased in four-inch-thick blocks of tile," he explained, according to the *New York Times*. "Fireproofing on the floors was still more impressive, with an archlike arrangement of tile a foot thick having stopped the flames from burning through one story to the next." Aside from a few structural columns that had slightly buckled on the upper floors, the building "had battled the fire and essentially won," the article noted.

"The cost and installation of such tile today would probably be prohibitive," the report stated, getting to what is the bottom line for the profit-hungry capitalists who run the construction industry. However, it continued, the reason why one collapsed and the other didn't "remains one of the deepest mysteries" that engineers have faced.

Responding to this assertion, Ross Firestone, a materials scientist with 40-years experience developing substances to protect structures from high temperatures, wrote a letter to the *Times*.

"It is no mystery: the fireproofing on the steel structural elements of the World Trade Center was inadequate," he wrote. "I hope architects and engineers will learn from this disaster and construct adequately fireproofed buildings again."

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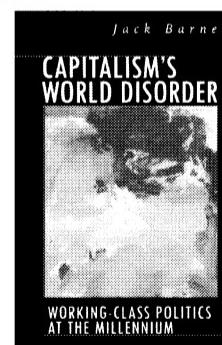
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Latin, Caribbean parties meet in Havana

Cuban leader: U.S. ‘antiterror’ drive is cover for militarization of region

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL
AND MARY-ALICE WATERS

HAVANA—"The September 11 terrorist acts in the United States have demonstrated, in a tragic, unfortunate, senseless, and unjustifiable manner," said José Ramón Balaguer, "that a handful of major powers could not monopolize all the world's wealth, development, technology, culture, education and public health, and at the same time remain immune to the consequences of the political, economic, and social polarization this process would provoke on a global scale."

Balaguer, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Cuba and head of the party's Department of International Relations, was addressing the opening session of the 10th meeting of the São Paulo Forum, held here December 4–7. The Forum is made up of political parties from across Latin America and the Caribbean that define themselves as anti-imperialist and against neoliberalism.

A decade ago, Balaguer noted, the Soviet Union was disintegrating; Washington had recently invaded Panama and led a devastating assault on Iraq. The imperialist rulers were proclaiming a "New World Order" and promised a "spillover effect" that would eventually benefit the oppressed nations of the world.

Today, he noted, it is evident that the concentration of wealth and technological superiority "did not help imperialism find the panacea to overcome the sharpening of its antagonistic contradictions." They have driven it to a new crisis.

Marxism is a guide for action

The Cuban leader pointed to the devastating consequences in Latin America and the Caribbean: growing unemployment, attacks on workers' pensions and other social gains, assaults on union rights, and

the ruinous effects of establishing the U.S. dollar as official currency in some Latin American countries.

These developments show that "the ideas of Karl Marx, Frederick Engels and Vladimir Lenin have proven to be as valid as ever, demonstrating that Marxism is not a dogma but... a guide for revolutionary action," he insisted.

The meeting of the São Paulo Forum drew more than 500 delegates and guests from 84 countries, representing 74 member organizations from the region and 127 invited groups. The almost yearly gatherings, which have taken place in different Latin American countries, originated in a 1990 meeting in São Paulo, Brazil.

Especially notable at this year's meeting was the substantial participation from the

Caribbean, and the large number of guests from parties outside the Americas.

The São Paulo Forum encompasses a wide range of political currents and operates on the basis of consensus. Thus proposals for action coming out of its meetings are limited. But the Forum has proven itself useful as a platform for Latin America-wide discussion among anti-imperialist forces. The Working Group, the São Paulo Forum's organizing body, includes the Workers Party (PT) of Brazil, Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) of Nicaragua, Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) in Mexico, Communist Party of Colombia, Organization of the People in Struggle (OPL) of Haiti, Broad Front of Uruguay, and Communist Party of Cuba.

The largest delegations were from Puerto

Rico, Mexico, Colombia, and the Dominican Republic, with about two or three dozen delegates each. Some 20 were from the English- and French-speaking Caribbean.

A significant number of representatives of organizations outside Latin America and the Caribbean attended as invited guests. These included about 75 from Western Europe, with the largest delegation from Spain, and another 20 from North America, Japan, and Australia. The nine U.S. guests included representatives of the Socialist Workers Party, Communist Party USA, Workers World Party, and Freedom Socialist Party. From Canada, the Communist League, Communist Party, and Communist Party Marxist-Leninist were represented.

Unlike some previous meetings of the Forum, this one gave voice to the guests. A large number of them spoke during the two and a half days of plenary sessions, from a European Union parliamentary deputy to a representative of the government of Laos.

The gathering also included sessions of the regional sub-secretariats—for the Southern Cone; the Andean region; and Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean—that brought proposals to the plenary for consideration. A meeting of the Youth Commission also took place, with young people from 25 organizations in 15 countries. It was the third time a Youth Commission had met at a conference of the São Paulo Forum, and was the largest so far. On the last day, the delegates discussed and adopted a Final Declaration and a number of motions.

Antiterror drive: cover for militarization

Balaguer, who gave the main talk at the opening session, emphasized that "throughout the course of history, U.S. imperialism has taken advantage of every opportunity to extend and deepen the domination and subordination of Latin America and the Caribbean." It has always maintained a "big stick" policy toward the countries of the region. And since September 11, he noted, "the stick has been the Bush Doctrine: 'You're either with us or you're with the terrorists.' This means that all those who do not support the unjustified aggression of which the people of Afghanistan are victims—and of which other peoples of the world may perhaps be victims as well—will be considered terrorists and treated as such, in the way Uncle Sam deems appropriate."

"This is a blatant attempt," Balaguer added, "to step up a longstanding imperialist tactic: that of criminalizing those who oppose its dictates, particularly the left and progressive movements. It is also a no less blatant attempt to pressure the governments of the region into finally giving in to all the demands of its new system of domination, including the revival of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, or Rio Treaty, one of the first instruments of continental domination created by imperialism after the end of World War II. This is the very same treaty the U.S. government prevented Latin America from invoking during the [1982 British assault on Argentina in] Malvinas War."

U.S. imperialism, he explained, seeks to "impose a broad and vague definition of terrorism, which mixes in drug trafficking, national liberation struggles, social protest, and migratory flows."

Washington's threats and military intervention—carried out under the guise of combating "terrorism" or drug trafficking—are aimed at social struggles brewing across the continent, he noted. Today they are centered in the volatile Andean region.

As numerous delegates emphasized, one aspect of this growing U.S. military presence is "Plan Colombia"—now renamed the Andean Initiative—under which Washington is directing billions of dollars in military aid to the Colombian regime. The program provides for increasing the number of U.S. military personnel in Colombia as well as expanding the U.S. military presence in Ecuador, Bolivia, and Peru under the cover of "drug interdiction."

This stepped-up military intervention, Balaguer remarked, goes hand in hand with



Oil workers contingent in May Day 2000 march in Quito, Ecuador, against dollarization moves and U.S. military base in city of Manta. Washington's "Andean Initiative" involves step-up in U.S. military operations in region from Colombia to Bolivia.

Militant/Hilda Cuzco

Puerto Rican fighters discuss struggle against U.S. colonial oppression

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

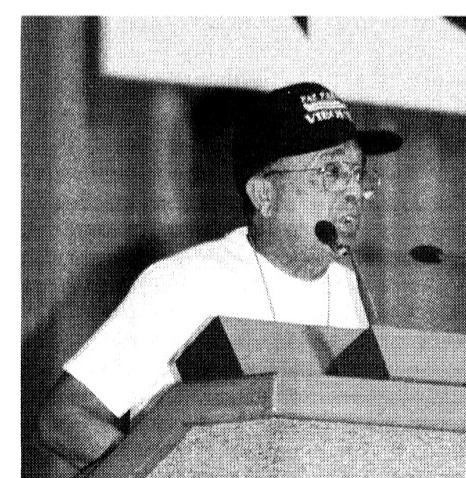
HAVANA—"We were told that because of September 11 we should postpone our struggle in Vieques. But we are continuing to fight to get the U.S. Navy off our land and out of our country," said Carlos Zenón in a December 5 interview here.

Zenón, president of the Vieques Fishermen's Association, was attending the December 4–7 meeting of the São Paulo Forum, as part of a 40-person delegation from Puerto Rico. He had to leave the conference early because of a pending court hearing, later postponed to January 20, to face charges of "trespassing" on Navy-occupied territory.

Since World War II, fishermen and other inhabitants of Vieques have been fighting the encroachment on their land by the U.S. military, which uses the island for bombing practice and military training maneuvers in preparation for wars waged by U.S. imperialism around the world, including the current assault on Afghanistan. The movement exploded anew after David Sanes, a civilian guard, was killed by a 500-pound "errant" Navy bomb in April 1999. Opposition to the Navy's continued use of Vieques today remains the focal point of the struggle against U.S. colonial rule over Puerto Rico.

Among the hundreds of other protesters who have been arrested for carrying out civil disobedience protests on the Navy-held land are two of Zenón's sons. Pedro and Casimir Zenón, 23 and 22 years old, respectively, were convicted December 6 and face sentencing December 27.

In early November, U.S. authorities also arrested a third son, Yabureibo. "You would think they were looking for Osama bin Laden," Carlos Zenón said. "They showed up at my house to arrest a youth in his 20s, accompanied by the local cops, with rifles and everything." The FBI posted sharpshooters nearby, as the cops surrounded the home and demanded the "surrender" of Yabureibo Zenón and his father, who was not there at the time. The agents handcuffed



Carlos Zenón addresses São Paulo Forum

the young man, drove him to the water's edge, where 60 cops were waiting for him, and whisked him away to the mainland in a U.S. customs boat.

During the São Paulo Forum, several leaders of the pro-independence movement spoke at a press conference. Carlos Torres of the Federation of Pro-Independence University Students (FUPI) explained that the struggle around Vieques is part of a broader fight against U.S. colonial rule. "As youth we are used as cannon fodder for imperialism's wars," he said.

Washington's 'antiterrorist' campaign

Julio Muriante of the New Independence Movement (NMIP), Jorge Farinacci of the Socialist Front, and Rosa Meneses of the Nationalist Party all described how today the U.S. government is using its "antiterrorist" campaign as cover for increased spying and harassment of the independence movement, trade unions, and other political activists in Puerto Rico.

Pro-independence and union fighters on the island have a long experience with FBI disruption. The FBI's Cointelpro operations

in Puerto Rico—massive wiretapping, spying, poison pen letters, use of agents provocateurs, police raids, entrapments, and frame-ups—were exposed and widely repudiated in the 1970s and '80s.

The new antiterrorist law approved by the Bush administration is so broad in its scope that it could be used to label civil disobedience protesters in Vieques as "terrorists," said Héctor Pesquera of the National Hostos Congress.

Several speakers noted that since September 11, in face of the imperialist war and Washington's intensified pressure to keep Vieques for military training, Puerto Rican governor Sila Calderón of the Popular Democratic Party (PPD) has dropped her previous insistence that the Navy leave immediately. Calderón won election last year because she had wrapped herself in the Vieques banner. Such seeming inconsistency is not surprising, remarked Meneses of the Nationalist Party. "She represents a colonial party."

Ismael Guadalupe, spokesperson of the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques, explained that those fighting to free the island from the U.S. Navy are internationalizing the struggle.

Leaders of the committee, he said, have recently been traveling to Okinawa, Guam, Hawaii, the Philippines, and India, as well as Cuba.

"It pains me to see U.S. planes that trained in Vieques bombing hospitals and homes in Afghanistan," Guadalupe stated. "This is what we are fighting to end."

He said that over the past two months, opponents of the U.S. Navy have organized marches, pickets, civil disobedience actions, and a successful strike in Vieques in support of the mayor, who was jailed for protesting the U.S. military presence. A large turnout of supporters are expected to attend the sentencing hearing for Pedro and Casimir Zenón, their father said in a phone interview from Vieques.

Washington's efforts to establish the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) as a trade bloc that will allow the U.S. rulers to plunder more freely the wealth and labor of the region—a move that undermines the national sovereignty of all the oppressed countries in the Americas.

In the discussion, one Venezuelan delegate described Plan Colombia as "the armed wing of the FTAA."

In accepting the FTAA, the Cuban leader said, "the Latin American and Caribbean bourgeoisies are deluded into believing that there can actually be 'free trade' in a world where the market is controlled by monopolies, and that there can be equality in trade relations between the biggest superpower in the world and a group of nations that, regardless of their different levels of relative industrialization, are all by definition undeveloped."

In this world, Balaguer concluded, the Cuban Revolution shows that it is possible to stand up to imperialism. "This small nation, blockaded, attacked, isolated, with no major natural resources and lacking in sources of external financing, was able to endure and overcome" the economic challenges of the past decade. "We have yet to overcome all of our difficulties, but we are the masters of our destinies." The Cuban people draw strength from their "spirit of self-sacrifice, solidarity, and internationalism; they know where they are headed, and are certain they will reach their goal."

Fight against U.S. military in Vieques

Contributions to the discussion from Latin American and Caribbean organizations tended to focus on opposition to the FTAA, one of the main positions held in common by the members of the São Paulo Forum. Washington's assault against Afghanistan, its broader militarization drive, and the sharpening aggression by the Israeli rulers against the Palestinian people, which reached a new crescendo as the meeting was under way, were referred to by many delegates, but were



Militant/Martin Koppel
Capitalism offers humanity no solutions, said Cuban president Fidel Castro in address to closing session.

less central to the discussion.

One of the strongest points of the gathering was the focus on the Puerto Rican struggle to get the U.S. Navy out of the island of Vieques. The 40-person Puerto Rican delegation, representing several pro-independence and socialist organizations, played a prominent and active role in the event.

Addressing the conference, Carlos Zenón, president of the Vieques Fishermen's Association, declared, "In Vieques, World War II never ended." He pointed out how Washington, "in the name of national defense, has used Vieques to attack other peoples around the world" by conducting bombing practice, war maneuvers, and mock invasions on that tiny Puerto Rican island.

Zenón described the tenacious resistance in Puerto Rico to the U.S. Navy's control of Vieques. Like more than 1,000 other people over the past two years, he has been arrested for holding protests on Navy-occupied land. In fact, he had to leave the conference after addressing the plenary session in order to appear in a U.S. court in San Juan to face trespassing charges.

The fisherman explained that he was in Havana in defiance of a U.S. judge who had ordered him not to leave Vieques. By standing up to Washington, Zenón remarked, Cuba "is like a splinter in their eye."

The discussion at the São Paulo Forum on the imperialist militarization drive—under the banner of fighting "terrorism"—registered the differentiated responses of the broad spectrum of political parties present. Some considered it important to begin by establishing their own credentials as "antiterrorist."

Others, especially delegates from political currents in Central America and Colombia—who have been in the recent past or are today in open armed conflict with imperialist-backed regimes and have themselves been labeled terrorist—most clearly addressed the question of imperialist military intervention and the capitalist rulers' use of the "terrorism" banner to attack the workers movement and its allies.

Schafik Handal of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), which in the 1980s waged a guerrilla struggle against a brutally repressive U.S.-backed regime, said of Washington's propaganda campaign: "The terrorists accuse us of terrorism." Representatives of the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) pointed out that the U.S. government has for years been using "antiterrorism" as a pretext to intervene militarily in their country.

'Triple Border' on U.S. 'terrorism' list

Ligia Pietro of the Authentic Radical Party in Paraguay described the anti-Muslim witch-hunt being waged in the area of the "Triple Border," where Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil meet. The Paraguayan regime, like its U.S. imperialist master, is conducting interrogations, detentions, and brutalization of people of Arab descent in towns such as Ciudad del Este, which has a substantial population of Lebanese and Syrian background.

The Triple Border—which is near areas in northern Argentina where sustained working-class protests against government austerity measures have taken place—is one of the areas of the world, from Somalia to the Philippines, that U.S. officials have labeled "a base for al-Qaeda" and put on their list of potential military targets. U.S. forces have been training dozens of Brazilian, Paraguayan, and Argentine cops in "fighting terrorism" in that area.

Sharpening confrontation in Venezuela

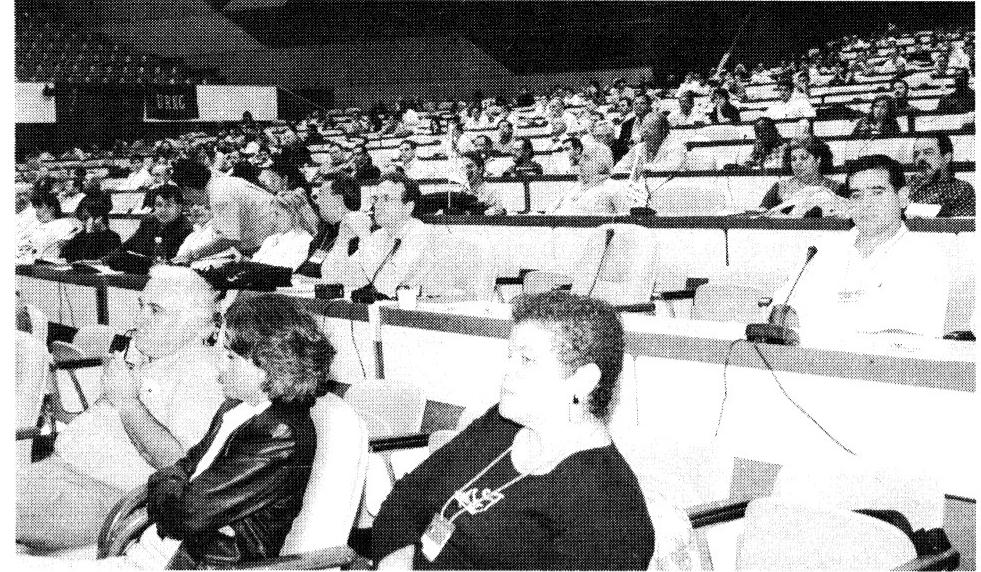
The sharpening political conflict in Venezuela also received special attention from the Latin American and Caribbean delegates. Many speakers expressed support for recent actions taken by the government of President Hugo Chávez. Brazilian PT presidential candidate Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva left the Havana conference after the first day and traveled to Venezuela in order to lend support to Chávez prior to the December 10 reactionary bosses' strike. The Venezuelan employers reacted with hostility to the government's land reform, oil exploration, and other laws. The agrarian reform measure calls for government review of the holdings of wealthy landowners and the expropriation of idle land, while the oil exploration law increases royalty taxes on private companies seeking to exploit the country's enormous oil reserves.

The Final Declaration presented for adoption on the last day of the meeting did not refer to these or any other concrete political struggles. The delegates from Puerto Rico and Martinique, however, insisted that the declaration give explicit support to the anti-colonial struggles in the Caribbean. The fight to remove the U.S. military from Vieques and the independence struggles in Guadeloupe and Martinique, Netherlands Antilles, and other French and Dutch colonies were incorporated into the statement. Separate, brief resolutions opposing the U.S.-led war on Afghanistan, supporting the five Cubans framed up in the United States on espionage conspiracy charges, and on several other issues were also approved.

'Coming period will be decisive'

Fidel Castro, who attended the plenary sessions every day and occasionally joined the discussion, gave the closing speech of the conference.

"The coming period will be decisive for the world," he stated. It will lead either to a



Militant/Martin Koppel

Forum drew 500-plus delegates from Latin America, the Caribbean, and elsewhere.

new system of social justice or to a worldwide catastrophe. Capitalism offers no solutions to humanity, he said. "They are bereft of ideas."

Over the past decade, Castro explained, revolutionary Cuba confronted a "Special Period," the term used here for the exceptionally harsh economic conditions the island faced after the collapse of the Soviet bloc regimes and the end of aid and trade at preferential rates from these countries, which abruptly forced Cuba to face more directly the exploitative terms of trade imposed by the imperialist-dominated world market. This squeeze was compounded by the intensified U.S. economic war on Cuba.

The revolution survived this challenge and has come out stronger, Castro said.

Pointing to the accelerating international economic and social crisis, the Cuban leader said that today it is "imperialism, neo-liberalism, and capitalism that find themselves in a Special Period."

He described the growth of "the enormous balloon" of speculative capital throughout the 1990s, in which, like the alchemists of old, the capitalists acted as though they could "turn paper into gold."

This deepening disaster is exemplified by Argentina, he said, which is virtually bankrupt and unable to meet its payments on the ever-mounting foreign debt to imperialist banks. The brutal "austerity" measures and the de facto devaluation come down hard-

est on working people, who have responded with strikes and protests.

Today, Castro pointed out, the United States is in a recession that, like the Argentine debacle, began well before September 11 and has only deepened since then.

He reiterated the Cuban leadership's stance of opposing the imperialist war on Afghanistan as well as rejecting terrorist actions.

In face of this situation, Castro said, those who are resisting imperialist exploitation and oppression set an example: from the Palestinians refusing to buckle in face of the Israeli regime's escalating military assault, to the Puerto Ricans standing up to the power of the U.S. military, courts, and government.

Cuba shows what "an authentic revolution" can accomplish, he noted, from the internationalist solidarity demonstrated by the 3,000 Cuban volunteer doctors serving abroad, to the steps being taken today to deepen access to culture and education among millions across the island in city and country.

"Socialism is the only system that can bring about the highest justice to society," drawing on the capacities and talents of ordinary human beings, Castro said.

Conference organizers announced that the 11th meeting of the São Paulo Forum will be in Guatemala City in November 2002.

Judge lifts death sentence in case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, denies new trial

BY JOHN STUDER

PHILADELPHIA—U.S. District Judge William Yohn Jr. issued a ruling December 18 lifting the death sentence on Mumia Abu-Jamal, a longtime Black rights activist framed up in 1981 on charges of murdering a Philadelphia cop.

Judge John's 270-page ruling also denied Abu-Jamal's efforts to win a new trial. Backed by an international defense campaign, Abu-Jamal has been fighting to overturn his conviction and win his freedom. His lawyers had appealed his conviction, arguing that he was the victim of a racist court system, a biased judge, and court rulings that denied him a fair trial. In addition, they had presented to the judge a new affidavit from Arnold Beverly, who states that he was the one who killed the police officer.

The judge ruled that the sentencing hearing that led to the death penalty being imposed on Abu-Jamal after his trial violated his constitutional rights. He found that the judge who presided over Abu-Jamal's trial, Albert Sabo, had improperly told the jurors that they had to rule unanimously. This made it impossible for individual jurors to consider "mitigating circumstances" that would lead them to vote to keep Abu-Jamal from being put to death.

Cops and supporters of the death penalty berated the judge's decision. Richard Costello, president of the Fraternal Order of Police in Philadelphia, called the ruling "bizarre" and "a miscarriage of justice." Lynne Abraham, Philadelphia district attorney and noted proponent of the death penalty, called the judge's argument "unsupportable" and said that she would appeal the ruling.

The judge ruled that Abu-Jamal's death sentence be set aside and gave the prosecutors 180 days to either file a motion for a new sentencing hearing or let Abu-Jamal's sentence become life in prison.

Supporters of Abu-Jamal applauded the

judge's ruling for setting aside the death penalty. J. Michael Farrell, Abu-Jamal's attorney in Philadelphia, said that the judge "has saved a life that never should have been at risk in the first place."

Philadelphia civil liberties attorney David Kairys explained that the ruling helps defend everyone's rights. "They're not technicalities," he said, "they really go to the heart of whether the jury meant to impose the death penalty or not."

At the same time, Abu-Jamal's supporters and attorneys immediately announced their intention to appeal the judge's refusal to grant Abu-Jamal a new trial. "Mumia is innocent," said Pam Africa, a central leader of the Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, "and we want him released."

Facts on where U.S. farm subsidies go now available on Internet

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

A report that is of interest to workers and farmers on government farm subsidies is now available on the Internet.

The United States Congress is currently discussing a new farm bill that would allocate more than \$70 billion over the next decade to subsidy programs. But who receives the bulk of these funds? The answer is—the owners of the largest, wealthiest farmlands.

Information posted on the web site of the EWG, a nonprofit organization, shows that of the 2.5 million farmers in the United States, 1,290 of the wealthiest farmers each received more than \$1 million in subsidy payments between 1996 and 2000.

In contrast the average farm in the bottom 80 percent got just \$5,830.

The Environmental Working Group web site can be accessed at www.ewg.org

Socialists chart course in fight again

Continued from front page

at the fair, a growing number of discussions at the booth about the class struggle in the United States, and a layer of workers and youth who have returned to meet socialist workers and youth at the fair each year (see article on page 11).

Other speakers included Jack Willey, a *Militant* staff writer who departed the next day for Greece where he was to attend a meeting of the World Federation of Democratic Youth; Jacob Perasso, the organizer of the Young Socialists National Executive Committee; and Mary-Alice Waters, editor of *New International*. Róger Calero, director of the Pathfinder Fund, explained the importance of the upcoming publishing plans of Pathfinder and encouraged those attending to contribute generously to the \$125,000 fund drive.

Many of the workers and youth in attendance volunteered their labor over the weekend, joining crews at the Pathfinder Building. The projects were aimed at taking the next steps in reorganizing the printshop so it can meet the sharpening competition in the commercial market in the area and at the same time continue to turn out tens of thousands of Pathfinder books and pamphlets every year, in addition to the weekly *Militant* and monthly *Perspectiva Mundial*.

Coming out of the two days of voluntary labor, popularly known in the communist movement as Red Weekends, socialist workers and youth decided to keep the momentum going through December 24 in order to complete the major projects in the reorganization of the printshop. When the work is done on December 24, the volunteers will have consolidated the entire shop on the first floor of the Pathfinder Building, the pick-and-pack operation that fills order for Pathfinder books and pamphlets produced by the shop; large areas for storage of paper used on the presses; and space for shipping and receiving. The work involves preparations to move two sheetfed



Ana Morales, right, president of local chapter of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution, speaks at a neighborhood celebration of the 45th anniversary of the uprising in Santiago de Cuba, which together with the landing of the *Granma* expedition two days later, marked the beginning of Cuba's revolutionary war. Morales is also assistant director of international relations at the Latin American School of Medicine, where thousands of youth from other countries are studying on scholarships. The Combatants Association is made up of Cubans who have served in internationalist missions and other revolutionary combat. They are playing a role in educating new generations of Cubans in the history and traditions of the Cuban Revolution, advancing the continuity of communist leadership.

presses used in the production of all Pathfinder books to an area that previously housed the printshop's bindery.

In addition, moving the offices of the newspaper and publishing house into the same location of a branch of the party in New York City will require the digital organization of the many records and historical materials of the Socialist Workers Party, the *Militant*, and Pathfinder. This project will be at the center of the daily work of the publishing staffs and will be supplemented by Red Weekends in January and beyond. The move will put the communist movement in the best political position to deepen its work in the unions and workers' districts, among youth on college campuses, and to recruit new generations to the communist movement.

Acceleration of political trends

Pointing to these moves and the transformation of the physical setup of the printshop, Barnes said the production of revolutionary books and pamphlets is a central task for communists. This includes titles that contain the rich lessons of the workers' movement and communist writings over the past 150 years. It also includes books that explain from inside the United States—the now dominant, but fi-

nal empire humanity will ever know—a Marxist perspective on current world developments and the possibilities of forging a proletarian leadership as the crises of world capitalism deepen and the rulers intensify their assaults.

Barnes said that Washington's launching of a war drive in September has simply "accelerated trends that have been developing for some time." The most important goal of Washington's brutal assault is not Afghanistan, Pakistan, or Iran, but India, he said, where under the Clinton administration the U.S. ruling class set a course to deepen economic, military, and political ties with what will be an increasingly weighty capitalist power in the region, and one with a yearly economic output that will soon surpass that of France and Germany.

"The imperialist war against Afghanistan was not against terrorism or any 'ism,'" Barnes said. Instead, it was a war among state powers to establish hegemony and to prepare to face conflicts that are at different stages among the rival imperialist powers as they each reach out to gain an edge for themselves in a situation of intensifying competition and conflicts.

The growing statification and militarization that marks imperialism has also been accelerated with the war drive, he said. Despite the talk of the Reagan and Thatcher administrations in the United States and United Kingdom in favor of "small government," each increased the power of the

centralized imperialist state, a trend explained by Russian communist leader V.I. Lenin early in the century, Barnes said.

Combined with this, he said, is a drive toward militarization—using the military forces of the state inside the borders of the imperialist "democracies" in country after country. The rulers justify the growing presence of troops, National Guard, border patrols, and federal police with an ideological campaign to convince working people that "there is a 'we'—that workers and farmers have something in common with the superwealthy capitalist exploiting families," he said.

Defending workers' rights

"For the imperialists, a precondition to fighting a war is fighting it at home," Barnes explained. "We fight to defend and advance workers' rights, not 'democracy.' The mark of a 'democratic society' in the decline of imperialism is increasing class differentiation. Fighting workers of an earlier generation used to point out this reality by saying that Rockefeller and a guy with nothing both have the same right to know it is illegal to sleep under a bridge," he said. "You can be fined and face disaster only if you are a worker and without capital. If Ted Turner ran for office and was fired for his political views—an unlikely scenario, and something we would oppose—he would not have to think one moment about how to pay the rent, unlike Michael Italie, who was thrown on the street by Goodwill from his job as a sewing machine operator because of what he said at a candidates debate about the actions of the U.S. government."

"These kinds of fights are about workers' rights," Barnes said. "If workers aren't affected in a differential way by the carrying out of 'democracy' under capitalism, then capitalism can't survive. For property of this kind—the private ownership of the means of production—to continue, the propertyless millions have to depend on selling their labor power and making a wage in order to survive."

"That is why thinking workers and farmers never think of 'me' but always think of 'us,'" he said. "The bourgeoisie chooses its victims. But what Michael Italie and others who have stood up to fight show is that they can choose whoever they want in the communist movement and their 'victims' will come to the head of a fight that will set the bosses back much more than anything gained in the initial blow they inflicted."

Barnes said that communists seek to lead workers to defend the gains of the democratic revolution won by workers and farmers through revolutionary battles and mass popular struggles of labor and its allies. "Unless workers fight from the point of view of workers' rights, democratic rights will be lost. All reforms by the capitalist class," he said, "are the by-product of revolutionary struggle. All defense of and advances in democratic rights come out of the battles to defend workers' rights."

World Festival of Students and Youth

Jack Willey, who helped lead a delegation from the United States of Young Socialists to the 15th World Festival of Youth and Students in Algeria this past summer, also addressed the audience. Willey reported that he was headed to Athens, Greece, the following day to attend a meeting of the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) to "evaluate the Algiers festival and discuss where do we go from here."

"Some 6,500 people attended the youth festival in Algeria," Willey explained in his presentation, "which was marked by those who came from countries oppressed by imperialism."

YS members who attended came from seven countries. After the festival ended they organized a trip to Western Sahara to learn about the struggle of the Sahrawi people against the U.S.-backed Moroccan regime's assaults on their struggle for self-determination.

"The Algiers festival stood on the shoulders of the youth festival held in Cuba in 1997," noted Willey. It "proved that a new

Pathfinder Fund

	Goal	Paid	%
Tampa	800	1,340	168%
Tucson	150	208	139%
Houston	3,500	4,620	132%
Charlotte	3,650	4,575	125%
St. Paul	4,000	4,705	118%
Chicago	6,000	7,058	118%
Birmingham	3,200	3,666	115%
Allentown	1,700	1,945	114%
NY Garment District	6,500	7,350	113%
Des Moines	1,400	1,555	111%
Pittsburgh	5,000	5,418	108%
Philadelphia	3,000	3,235	108%
Los Angeles	9,000	9,530	106%
Seattle	8,000	8,475	106%
Western Colorado	4,400	4,660	106%
Washington DC	3,000	3,160	105%
Cleveland	1,500	1,553	104%
Brooklyn	3,500	3,589	103%
Miami	2,200	2,271	103%
San Francisco	8,500	8,675	102%
Detroit	4,000	4,061	102%
Atlanta	5,000	5,062	101%
Upper Manhattan	3,700	3,721	101%
Boston	4,500	4,485	100%
Omaha	800	785	98%
Newark	3,500	3,235	92%
Other	0	1,920	0%
U.S. Total	100,500	110,856	110%
Australia	800	1,220	153%
France	200	280	140%
United Kingdom	500	600	120%
Canada	5,208	5,388	103%
Belgium	440	440	100%
New Zealand	940	944	100%
Sweden	600	150	25%
Int'l Total	109,188	119,878	96%
Total Should be	125,000	125,000	100%

Pathfinder supporters urged to send in final contributions to fund

BY RÓGER CALERO

By December 15, supporters of the Pathfinder Fund had contributed \$119,878 towards the international target of \$125,000 for the 12-week drive. We're at 96 percent of the goal and we urge supporters of the fund to send in any outstanding contributions to help put the drive over the top.

In the final week of the drive more than \$48,000 was collected at a series of political meetings and activities across the United States. These included a holiday celebration and wrap-up event for the fund in New York attended by 130 people, who contributed more than \$4,000. Some who pitched in doubled their pledges at the end of the program.

In Pittsburgh, socialist workers

organized a weekend of classes and a fund event December 15 that attracted participants from Cleveland and Columbus, Ohio. Similar events in other cities helped push supporters of the fund over the top of local goals.

"We've made it!" reads the note sent by supporters in Canada. "More will come in the next few days," they added. The international character of the fund was demonstrated right up to the last day of the drive when a note from supporters in Belgium arrived containing new contributions.

With some last minute efforts and additional pledges, the majority of areas went over their adopted local goals.

Articles in this week's *Militant* are a reminder of the importance of raising money for the publication of Pathfinder books.

To make a final contribution, write a check to the Pathfinder Fund and send it to 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

1st imperialism

festival movement has begun, which is marked by a qualitative shift in the workers' movement over the last decade."

Willey said discussion at the meeting in Athens will take up how to advance this course in the years ahead, including holding more frequent world youth festivals in order to more rapidly respond to new assaults and aggression by imperialism. "We must respond to the accelerating trends in world politics with an accelerating youth movement," he remarked.

YS doubles size, organizes new chapters

Since last spring, "the Young Socialists has doubled its size," said YS leader Jacob Perasso to applause from the audience. "We have new chapters in St. Paul, Minnesota; Seattle; Tucson, Arizona; and are recruiting new members in Miami."

The growing New York chapter includes "many youth from different backgrounds and international experiences, including from the Dominican Republic, Gambia, and elsewhere. Our meetings are bilingual with simultaneous translation."

Perasso said YS members in New York are forging joint trade union fractions with members of the Socialist Workers Party.



Militant/Greg McCartan

Volunteers clean walls of Pathfinder printshop to prepare for new coat of paint. Similar projects will continue through December 24 to further the re-organization of the printshop.

Workers and students in the chapter also join street tables in workers' districts to sell revolutionary literature.

Internationally the YS is also advancing, said Perasso, pointing to the moves in Iceland and Sweden where the Young Socialists and Communist League plan to fuse their two organizations.

At the world youth festival in Algiers, he reported, YS members met a delegation

of four youth from Haiti, discussed socialism and world politics with them, and described their work in the United States to build a proletarian youth organization and party. The Haitian youth bought every issue of *New International* magazine, studied them, and decided to form a Young Socialists when they returned home. "They have a chapter of 11 people and see the need to build a revolutionary workers party," he said. This is just one example, Perasso noted, of the interest in building revolutionary organizations capable of leading masses of working people in struggle that YS members found at the Algiers festival.

Beginnings of communist international

What Willey and Perasso have described, Barnes said, are the first steps toward launching a new communist international. Among the anti-imperialist currents reflected at the world youth festival are those who will respond to a new socialist revolution in the world. For younger members of the communist movement in the United States, as well as young communists in Cuba today, the opportunity to collaborate with anti-imperialist fighters on the international arena is a crucial one. It makes it possible to develop a movement of revolutionary-minded youth in the world today, and to gain experience, political confidence, and Marxist training while "constructing something that is essential in building a communist movement," he said.

Out of experiences such as these, Young Socialists and members of Communist Leagues in Iceland and Sweden have charted a course of fusing their forces in order to build on the strengths of various generations in building proletarian organizations capable of attracting, educating, and making disciplined combatants out of workers and youth who help lead working people to power and fight to overturn capitalism (see *Militant* issues nos. 45 and 48). This fusion perspective is one that has implications for Young Socialists and communist leagues in every country, Barnes said.

Featured speaker Mary-Alice Waters had returned to the United States from Cuba just days earlier, where she and a Pathfinder editorial team worked on a soon-to-be-released title, *From the Escambray to the Congo: Inside the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution* by Victor Dreke. Dreke was a combatant in the Rebel Army that led workers and peasants in Cuba to topple the Batista dictatorship in 1959, opening the first socialist revolution in the Americas. He was a central leader of the successful battle to crush U.S.-backed counterrevolutionary bands between 1960 and 1964, as well as second in command of the internationalist volunteers led by Ernesto Che Guevara who fought alongside national liberation forces in the Congo in 1965. He has played a leading role in the revolution ever since.

Waters also attended the 10th meeting of the São Paulo Forum December 4-7 in

Below, YS leader Jacob Perasso speaks as part of a panel December 15 on ways the communist movement is charting a course to fight imperialism and its assault on working people. The meeting took place during a weekend of volunteer work at the Pathfinder Building in New York. Right, Marcy Stone, a volunteer from Seattle, works on photo negative files of the *Militant* and Pathfinder. Another project will go through December 24.

Militant/right: Greg McCartan; below: Hilda Cuzco



Havana. The Forum is made up of political parties from across Latin America and the Caribbean that define themselves as anti-imperialist and against neoliberalism (see article, page 6).

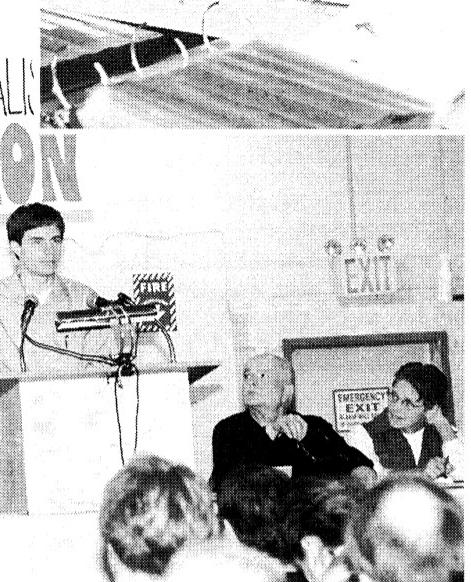
Waters referred to examples given by speakers at the meeting of the interest in Pathfinder books, and in meeting and talking with Young Socialists and socialist workers from the United States, by workers, farmers, and youth at book fairs, the world youth festival, and elsewhere. "These examples demonstrate the importance of what we do as communists inside the United States," she said, "with class clarity, with consistency, and by charting a course to take on and put an end to the financial empire in history."

Waters said Pathfinder will be presenting three titles at the upcoming Havana International Book Fair this year, an example of the growing number of titles in Spanish produced by the publishing house. "We can't publish a title only in English any more," she said, because getting books into the hands of working people and youth whose first language is Spanish is essential to building a communist party and youth organization in the United States and elsewhere. In addition to simultaneous publication in English and Spanish, Pathfinder is increasingly also producing a French-language edition as well.

"This year the Havana book fair goes on the road," Waters said, bringing publishers to several cities outside of the capital so a wider layer of the Cuba population has an opportunity to review and purchase books. "The revolution is expanding in this direction. They say, 'if we can publish more, we will.' About 5 million books will be made available through the book fair," she said, "including two editions of Pathfinder titles in Spanish: *Che Guevara Talks to Young People* and *Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism*."

Waters described the steps being taken to accelerate the expansion and opening up of the educational system in Cuba, including transforming use of television through educational and political programs such as "Round Table" discussions that have become a daily feature. Recent topics discussed include the economic crisis in Argentina, the imperialist assault on Afghanistan, the cultural policies of the revolution, and the 45th anniversary of the Nov. 30, 1956, uprising in Santiago de Cuba and the landing two days later of the *Granma* expedition.

These and other developments that have drawn broader layers of working people and youth into social and political life are examples of the fact that Cuba emerged victorious from the Special Period, the name used for the decade following the collapse of the Soviet Union and Eastern European governments in 1989-90 and the resulting dramatic drop in trade with and aid from



those countries.

Having won the battle of the Special Period and successfully defended the first socialist revolution in the Americas—defying all those around the world who claimed Cuba would suffer a fate similar to that of the USSR—"this is how the Cuban people are using the resources to advance a proletarian course," Waters said.

Books such as *From the Escambray to the Congo*, Waters said, help tell the real story of the Cuban Revolution and to make it accessible to people around the world. Pathfinder is making a contribution to getting down in print the real heart of the Cuban revolutionary struggle and how a leadership was forged, told by people in the middle of the struggle.

Young people who are searching for a revolutionary perspective and course of action cannot do so without communist works such as those published by Pathfinder—from *Capitalism's World Disorder*, the issues of *New International*, works by communist leaders such as Karl Marx and V.I. Lenin, and books by leaders of the Cuban Revolution. "What we are doing this weekend through the voluntary work brigades, and in the weeks to come, is preparing our movement to act, and to take the next steps to transform the production of Pathfinder books," Waters said.

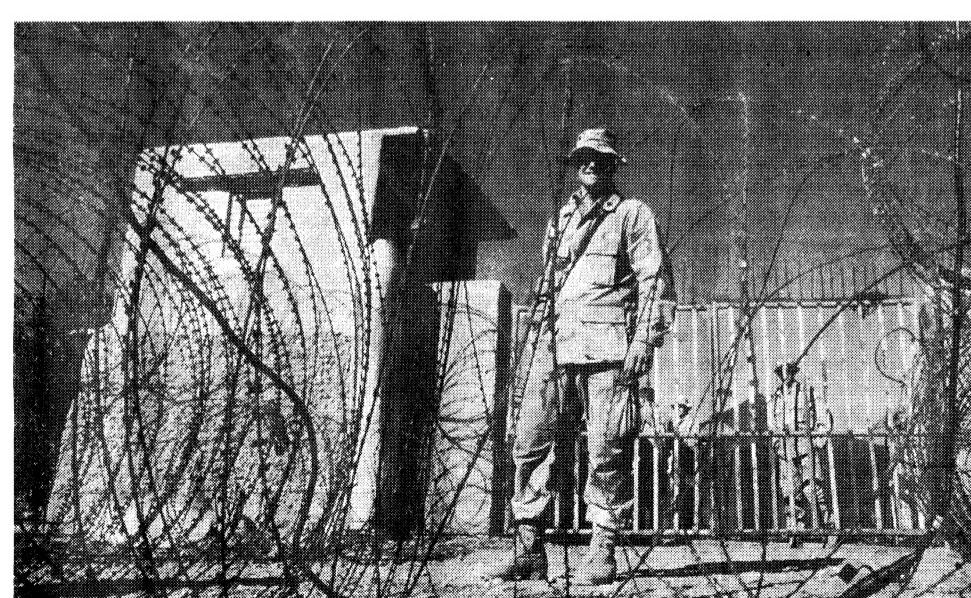
The assaults by imperialism and resistance to it around the world, Waters explained, mean the communist movement "can recruit and develop as communist, political cadre, new generations on—and from—every continent to confront the political world we live in today and meet the challenges ahead."

Working together for political goals

Over the weekend, *Militant* reporters interrupted several work crews to find out what they thought about the two days of voluntary labor and the evening program. In addition to work in the printshop, crews worked to prepare graphics and covers of Pathfinder books to send to volunteers who scan them and turn the books into electronic files, assisted in work to prepare Pathfinder's online bookstore, on organizing the photographic files of the *Militant*, helped to proofread and format the *Militant* index, and other projects.

Marcy Stone, a 19-year-old student at Seattle Central Community College, said she "came to the Red Weekend to see what's going on and what the Socialist Workers Party is all about." She has been reading the *Communist Manifesto*, which is among a few titles by Karl Marx she bought this summer. Stone said she recently purchased the pamphlet *Pathfinder Was Born with the October Revolution*, a subscription to the *Militant*, and the Young Socialist pamphlet *Join the Fight for Socialism*. "I still have a lot of questions, including about the difference between the

Continued on page 14



U.S. Marine stands guard at POW camp at Kandahar airport. Imperialist war against Afghanistan was war among state powers to establish hegemony, and to prepare to face conflicts among the rival imperialist states as they reach out in the world to gain an edge for themselves in a situation of intensifying competition and conflict.

Tensions rise as Indian government threatens Pakistan

Continued from front page

catic, self-confident and steadily-progressing India, whose standing in the international community is getting inexorably higher with the passage of time."

The five well-armed attackers were easily blocked from entering the parliament building, and were killed in a gun battle in which eight others died. Within a couple of days, the Indian police announced that under "intensive interrogation" four Pakistani citizens had confessed to conspiring in the attack. New Delhi's police commissioner said that the Jaish-e-Muhammad, or the Army of the Prophet, was responsible, while other Indian officials have also implicated Lashkar-e-Taiba, or the Army of the Pure. Washington has tagged both organizations, associated with the resistance in Kashmir to repression by the Indian armed forces, as "terrorist." Both groups deny involvement in the assault.

An Indian intelligence official said that the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence agency knew in advance about the attack. Others have gone further, implying that the agency was "pulling the strings behind the scenes."

Islamabad denies involvement

Pakistani military ruler Gen. Pervez Musharraf said his government had no connection to the attack. Spokesperson Rashid Qureshi said that if evidence was presented of the culpability of any group on its soil then Islamabad would itself "initiate action," and offered his government's participation in a joint inquiry.

"How does a joint investigation help?" said Advani in response, pointing to one claim by Qureshi he called "absurd"—that New Delhi had staged the attack itself in order to have a pretext for military action.

The cabinet of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee of the Hindu-chauvinist Bharatiya Janata Party declared that the "terrorists" will be liquidated, "wherever they are," referring to the Kashmiri groups' bases inside Pakistan.

Islamabad has stated that it will retaliate in self-defense if the Indian military carries out incursions into its territory.

New Delhi's war against insurgent Kashmiri forces has taken some 30,000 lives over little more than a decade. Both New Delhi and Islamabad try to make use of conflicts in the disputed territory, the center of two previous wars, in their mutual diplomatic and military relations. The Kashmiri independence struggle is the creation of neither country, however, having roots in British imperialism's brutal division of its colonial empire in 1947, as it tried by divide-and-rule methods to hold on to its power in face of a rising and massive independence struggle across India.

While seeking to prevent the outbreak of open hostilities, the U.S. government has supported New Delhi's targeting of the Kashmiri groups. Speaking on December 17, State Department spokesperson Richard Boucher put the onus on the Pakistani regime to deal with them. "We believe that

all countries are responsible for addressing terrorist activities within their borders and we'll continue our discussions with Pakistan in that context," he said.

A string of U.S. officials have visited India in recent months, aiming to cement closer military and economic ties between the two countries. For the first time since the 1980s, sales of fighter aircraft and other "major weapons platforms" are under discussion. Proposals for joint military exercises and other moves are justified in identical terms to those used by Washington in its increasing intervention in Asia, Latin America, and elsewhere. Military officials from both countries stated in the Indian capital on December 4 that they would work together "to counter threats such as the spread of weapons of mass destruction, international terrorism, narcotics trafficking, and piracy."

In mid-December, a U.S. aircraft carrier and its battle group stopped off the coast of Bombay after participating in the assault on Afghanistan. "The stop is unprecedented," reported the *Wall Street Journal*, "but it is happening with little fanfare and surprisingly little opposition from a country long prickly about its independence." The paper added that neither side is proposing any formal military alliance. Such a step would meet major protests among working people in India.

"We want to get going on this," said U.S. ambassador Robert Blackwill, referring to the accelerated pace of the two governments' rapprochement. Without the events of September 11 and their aftermath, he said, "we would have eventually gotten there, but it would have probably taken a year or two."

A major strategic prize

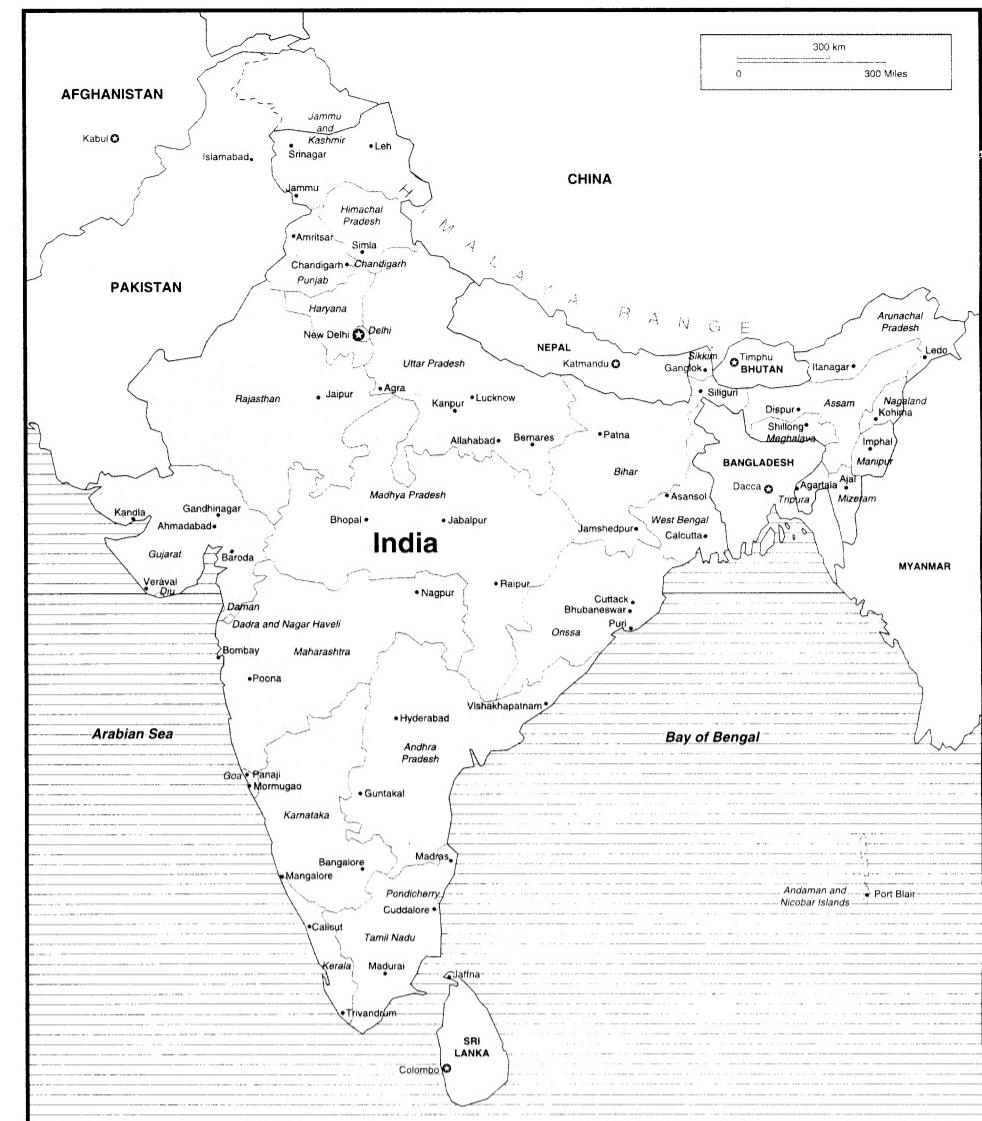
Situated next to the Chinese workers state and close to Central Asia, and possessing a substantial navy which patrols across important trade routes on the Indian sea, India is a major strategic prize for the imperialists. It is also a huge country with a population expected to exceed that of China early in the coming century.

Researchers Sterling Burnett and Wess Mitchell argued in the December 12 *National Review Online* that the Asian giant's importance "extends beyond military matters.... By 2025, gross domestic product is expected to exceed that of Germany and France."

"Long before the September 11 attacks," wrote Burnett and Mitchell, "India and the U.S. were actively cooperating to combat terrorism." They pointed to an agreement between former U.S. president William Clinton and Prime Minister Vajpayee, signed "almost one year to the day before the attacks."

William Richardson, former ambassador to the United Nations and a cabinet minister under Clinton, addressed similar themes in a *Los Angeles Times* column in mid-November, entitled, "India May Be Our Best Ally in That Troubled Region."

"We must...recognize that a strong India, supported by the United States, will be better able to deal with Pakistan regarding the disputed region of Kashmir, which is criti-



cal to South Asian stability," he wrote.

The capitalist politician noted the growing U.S.-India trade. "Indian imports have grown 8 percent in the last year," he wrote. "Imports from the United States now approach \$4 billion. The United States is India's largest investment partner, with total inflow of U.S. direct investment at \$2 billion in 1999. Conversely, the United States is India's largest market for exports.... A significant number of Indians, nearly 2 million, have emigrated to the United States."

Indian presence in Kabul

The Indian government's cooperation with the U.S. imperialists' aggression against Afghanistan, although less publicized than Islamabad's contribution of military bases, has nonetheless been significant. A supporter of the Soviet intervention into the country during the 1980s, in a period when it came into frequent conflict with Washington, New Delhi more recently provided aid and support to the Northern Alliance. Its officials offered bases and provided the U.S. rulers with intelligence on the locations of Taliban and al Qaeda military installations.

New Delhi moved rapidly to establish a presence in Kabul after the establishment of a pro-imperialist interim administration under United Nations auspices. A number of Afghan officials have visited India to discuss aid to the new regime and other questions. "New Delhi's fast-moving diplo-

macy—which has so far included aid to reopen the Indira Gandhi hospital in Kabul and plans for the first commercial air-link with Afghanistan since September 11—is thought to be partly aimed at undermining Pakistan's traditional influence over Kabul," reported the December 13 *Financial Times*.

In late November the Indian government pushed through the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance, containing wide-ranging attacks on legal and constitutional rights. Bearing similarities to legislation passed earlier in the United States, the 50-page "emergency decree" grants authorities the power to tap telephones, monitor e-mail, detain people without charges for up to six months, conduct secret trials inside jails, and allow the testimony of secret witnesses.

"Leading newspapers, civil liberties advocates, and the National Human Rights Commission" have opposed the ordinance, reported the *New York Times*. Critics noted that similar legislation, known as the Terrorism and Disruptive Act (TADA), lapsed in 1995 amid widespread opposition. "During the 10 years TADA was in force, more than 75,000 people were arrested, but only 1 percent were ever convicted of a crime," reported the paper. "The state that arrested the most people under TADA was Gujarat where there was no terrorist threat. Rather, the government of the time used the law in 1991 to jail thousands of farmers who were demanding cheaper electricity."

After 11-day walkout, unionists approve contract at Pratt and Whitney

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

After waging an 11-day strike against Pratt & Whitney, 5,100 members of the Machinists union approved a new three-year contract by a three-to-one margin and returned to work. The December 13 vote was 2,954 to 999 in favor of ending the walkout at Connecticut plants in East Hartford, North Haven, Middletown, and Cheshire.

This was the first walkout at all four plants since 1960. The company manufactures jet engines for commercial airliners and warplanes. "I think it's a win for the union," said Mark Dion, a worker at the Cheshire plant. "I think it's going to make the company think twice [during the next round of negotiations] in 2004."

The main issues in dispute were retirement benefits and job security. The new contract increases wages by 10 percent over three years, from \$23.27 to \$25.88. The monthly pension allotment for workers 62 and older was raised from \$40 to \$44. The figure is multiplied by the worker's years of service to determine the monthly pension payment. Younger workers will receive less.

For those with 25 years' service, the age eligibility for a special retirement option

package was reduced from 58 to 55. Under this plan workers would receive an additional \$13 a month for each year of service on top of their regular monthly pension. An additional \$325 would be added on each month.

"This is an important gain," stated James Parent, the chief negotiator for the four International Association of Machinists locals that went on strike. There are some 1,300 workers in these plants eligible for this plan, he noted.

The amount employees could contribute to 401 (k) plans was also increased, as was the amount matched by Pratt.

The contract states that there will be no layoffs due to subcontracting during the life of the agreement, one of the major issues in the walkout. If workers lose their jobs in this way, they must be retrained for other work. The new deal will also ensure that 115 workers in the North Haven plant, which is scheduled to close, will be placed in jobs elsewhere in the state.

"I think this contract is probably acceptable," commented Machinist Terry Madore, who works at the North Haven plant. "I've seen a whole lot worse."

Steelworkers strike in Alabama

BY BOB TUCKER

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama—Steelworkers here struck Sloss Industries after rejecting company demands for workers to increase payments for medical insurance. The bosses of the steel mill are seeking to eliminate free medical insurance for most retirees and, by the third year of the contract, force workers to pay 50 percent of any premium increase.

Kyle Parks, spokesman for Sloss Industries, claimed that a slight increase in monthly pensions for retirees "would more than offset insurance costs" for retirees, reported the *Birmingham News*.

But strikers had a different view. "They say there is no change in pay, but by the time you get done paying new medical insurance premiums you come out taking a pay cut. And that's before you actually have to go see a doctor," one worker on the picket line explained. "If a man works all of his

adult life for a company, he ought to have a right to insurance," added Jesse Barnett, United Steelworkers of America Local 12014 president.

The company's proposed contract also calls for a 10-hour-day, four-day-a-week schedule, a lower rate of pay for new employees, and tying future raises to the company's profitability figures.

Going into the third week of the strike, the 250-strong local faces a campaign by the company to tar union members with responsibility for several alleged acts of vandalism on company property.

"Everything in that plant that happens now will be blamed on us," said one worker. "And besides, it's like Fort Knox around here and nobody plans on going to jail by trying to jump that fence."

"The company thought they could divide us along age lines," one picket commented, "but the young folks are staying with it."

Revolutionary books to be available online

BY HOLLY HARKNESS

ATLANTA—On New Year's Day, workers, farmers and youth around the world will be able to log on to the internet and order revolutionary books and pamphlets directly from pathfinderpress.com. The new web site is the result of a concentrated effort over the past few months on the part of an international team of volunteers working together with the Pathfinder staff.

Opening the doors to the new store means that for the first time the nearly 600 titles published and distributed by Pathfinder in nine languages will be available online. The store contains a description of each Pathfinder title so that working people and youth who are opposing capitalism's assaults on workers' rights and conditions, working to build revolutionary organizations, and seeking to learn about struggles around the world can find books and pamphlets they need. As word of this international revolutionary bookstore gets out, working people, and students looking for the lessons of past struggles, the writings of working-class leaders, and the essential works of Marxism can go online to directly order from Pathfinder's arsenal of publications.

The launching of pathfinderpress.com is one way supporters of the publishing house are helping to meet Pathfinder's goal of selling \$500,000 worth of revolutionary literature between Jan. 1, 2001, and June 30, 2002.

Pat Smith, a volunteer in New York, designed the web site as an electronic bookstore with many of the features available at other online booksellers. The home page will feature new and noteworthy titles by Pathfinder (books and pamphlets on imperialism and war will be displayed in January), as well as the publisher's regular Books of the Month special discounts. Visitors will be able to browse by author, subject, or language. Soon afterwards they will also be able to browse by title as well, and enter keywords on the "search" page to find books related to specified topics.

The online store has an electronic shopping cart so readers can browse and collect the books and pamphlets they want to purchase, before proceeding to the "check out" page to submit an order.

A big contribution was made to the web site by a group of volunteers who collected and entered data on every title in Pathfinder's printed catalog and order form. Tom Tomasko, who organized the team, said about a dozen volunteers in the United States and Ireland entered the information and checked it for accuracy.

Other volunteers from San Francisco to Chicago and Stockholm, Sweden—and other cities in between—scanned more than 200 book covers and created colorful miniature web images to accompany the book information. Most of these volunteers had never done this type of work previously, but through their enthusiasm and determination, learned the skills they needed to use the tools and get the job done.

So bring in the New Year by logging on, exploring the new store, and ordering books from Pathfinder!

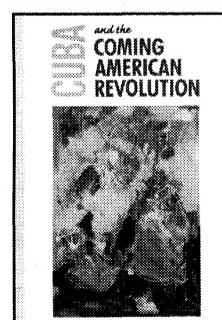
From Pathfinder

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

by Jack Barnes

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution is about the

struggles of working people in the imperialist heartland, the youth who are attracted to them, and the example set by the people of Cuba that revolution is not only necessary—it can be made. Preface by Mary-Alice Waters. In English, Spanish, and French.



Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

The screenshot shows the homepage of pathfinderpress.com. At the top, there is a large logo with the text "pathfinderpress.com". Below the logo, there are navigation links for "Home", "Author", "Subject", "Title", "Language", "Search", and "Shopping Cart". A banner at the top says "Coming Soon" and "You will soon be able to purchase books from Pathfinder Press Online". Below this, there is a section titled "Books and pamphlets on imperialism and war" with several book covers and titles listed. An inset image shows a specific page for "The Communist Manifesto" by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, featuring the full text of the manifesto.

Sample home page for the new pathfinderpress.com. Inset: web page for the Pathfinder edition of *The Communist Manifesto*.

Lively discussion, sales at Mexico book fair

BY FRANCISCO PICADO
AND DEBORAH LIATOS

GUADALAJARA, Mexico—The Pathfinder Press booth was a center of discussion during the November 24–December 2 Guadalajara International Book Fair, with workers, farmers, and especially young people purchasing 450 books and pamphlets distributed by the New York-based publisher of revolutionary literature.

Decorated with large blowups of several Pathfinder titles, many visitors stopped by the booth to discuss the deepening worldwide crisis of capitalism, Washington's war against the people of Afghanistan, and the resistance of the working people the world over. There was special interest shown in the struggles of the working class in the United States.

Numerous Pathfinder titles on the Cuban Revolution, a beacon showing how workers and farmers can take and hold power, were also an attraction to people passing by. Cuba will be the featured country at the 2002 fair, following Brazil, which was honored this year.

Over the course of the nine-day fair, the Pathfinder booth was staffed by volunteers from New York; Toronto; Charlotte, North Carolina; San Francisco; Philadelphia; St. Paul, Minnesota; and Los Angeles.

Among the best sellers were the Spanish-language editions of *Che Guevara Talks to Young People* with 53 copies sold; *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* by Jack Barnes with 50 copies sold, *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, *Capitalism's World Disorder*, and Thomas Sankara's *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle*. In addition, all five copies of the Pathfinder pamphlet, *Abortion: A Woman's Right to Choose* were sold in the first two days of the book fair.

A total of 67 English-language titles were sold mainly to Mexican students and workers, including several copies of *Marxism and Terrorism and Fascism: What It Is and How to Fight It*, along with *My Life* and *The History of the Russian Revolution*, all by Leon Trotsky; *Malcolm X Speaks*; and Nelson Mandela's *The Struggle is My Life*.

"Young people stayed at the booth for hours and there were many repeat customers," said Maria Alice Andre, a young staff volunteer at the Pathfinder booth. "A group of five high school students organized into a group called the Red Brotherhood Collective walked into our booth. They were very serious about politics," Andre explained. "They pooled all the money they

had and bought 10 books, including titles by Lenin, Marx, and by U.S. communist leader Jack Barnes," she said.

Guillermo Gómez, Pablo Ayala, José Juan, and Alejandro Carpio pooled their money to buy *Che Guevara Talks To Young People*. They are senior high school students at the Colegio Cervantes Costa Rica in Guadalajara. Gómez, who was wearing a T-shirt with the image of Che Guevara, said he had been assigned to do a biography in school and chose to do it on Che. "I read the *Bolivian Diary*, but I thought it was a little boring," he said. "Then I read *Episodes Of the Cuban Revolutionary War* and I have been looking for more books by him ever since."

"I like Che Guevara, I like Cuba. I have a deep admiration for the Cuban people because it has been an example of dignity, able to withstand the 'yanqui' might," said Roberto Olivares, a 42-year-old grain farmer who visited the Pathfinder booth. "I have read speeches by Che before and I would like someday to get his collected works."

"I am working so I can keep working. My standard of living is only getting lower," said Olivares, explaining the difficulties he and other small farmers are having. "I had not come to the fair for three years because I could not afford even one book. I come from a family that farmed for decades, but I am the last one left on the land."

Olivares, who has 100 head of cattle, said with the enactment of the North American Free Trade Agreement the "import of grain from the United States into Mexico has increased, causing the prices small farmers can get for their crops to plummet. At the same time the banks are charging more for loans."

Farmers' struggles

The Pathfinder volunteers explained the plight of small farmers in the United States and described some of the experiences farmers are going through, including organizing several fact-finding delegations to Cuba. Olivares said he would be interested in contacting those farmers. "Maybe we could help each other," he said, purchasing two titles.

Flavio González, a farm veterinarian who bought copies of the Spanish-language monthly *Perspectiva Mundial*, explained that "since Article 27 of the Mexican constitution was changed under the presidency of former Mexican president Carlos Salinas to allow the sale and purchase of 'ejidos,' communal lands that date back to the 1910–20 Mexican revolution, more and more farmers are losing their land. "I must know about 40 peasants that have lost their

land in the last several years and the new administration of Vicente Fox is no different," he said.

Sponsored by the University of Guadalajara, the book fair is a major literary and cultural event in Mexico and it is one of the most important events of its kind in Latin America. The huge Exposition Guadalajara where the book fair was held was filled to capacity, with more than 1,200 publishing houses participating from 32 countries.

There was significant interest among those attending the fair in a booth sponsored by sexual and reproductive rights groups in Mexico. This booth included information on birth control, abortion, which is illegal in Mexico, and gay rights. Among the hundreds of workshops there were several on these questions as well.

Cuban publishers staffed a substantial booth that was always filled with youthful crowds. During the course of the book fair, Cuban participants went to the University of Guadalajara and other campuses and spoke before several classes.

A total of 158 book presentations were made during the fair, which included programs on works by well-known writers such as Brazilian author Paulo Coelho. Brazil was featured this year so culture from the South American country was on display. A large stage set up outside the Exposition Center featured Brazilian music every night.

A number of workshops and symposiums were also held. A series of workshops on Chicanos in the United States included discussion on immigration between Mexico and the United States. Jorge Castañeda, the foreign affairs minister of the Mexican government, was the featured speaker at the standing-room-only final session. Several young people protested his presentation with signs saying, "Traitor" and "Castañeda, Mexico is not for sale." Another man in the audience shouted his opposition to the Mexican government's support for the U.S. war in Afghanistan.

Cuban publishers also participated in a number of workshops with authors from the island speaking on their books on politics, literature, health, medicine, and other questions. This included presentations on titles by Cuban publishing houses Editora Politica, Ciencias Sociales, and others.

Teresa Valdés from the Organization in Solidarity with the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America (OSPAAAL), based in Cuba, which publishes *Tricontinental* books and magazines, and Luis Madrid from Path-

Continued on Page 14

Argentine workers rebel, face cop assaults

Continued from front page

number of small business owners, squeezed by debt and high interest rates. A major demand of the protest was the lifting of a recent decree that limits bank withdrawals to \$250 a week. The government imposed this measure to prevent a run on deposits and the evaporation of foreign reserves caused by fears of the devaluation of the peso.

The day before the general strike, thousands of working people joined in marches and rallies, as jobless workers demanding unemployment benefits set up road blocks in streets and highways leading into Buenos Aires. Shop owners organized "blackouts," shutting down store fronts. Residents of many working-class neighborhoods in the capital city organized noisy *cacerolazos*, in which protesters banged pots and pans from their doors and windows.

Retired workers mobilized in force. In face of the mass protests, the government backed off its earlier decision to delay pension payments by a week. Retirees receive a paltry pension of \$150 a month.

Protesting teachers in Buenos Aires province, who have not yet received their November paychecks, were told they would be paid their full December wages—not with pesos but with the hated *patacones*, one-year "bonds" viewed as increasingly worthless scrip.

Demand for unemployment insurance

During the weekend of protests, the Front against Poverty, a coalition led by the CTA, announced the results of a "referendum" it had organized to campaign for establishing unemployment insurance, which does not exist for most workers in Argentina. An estimated 3 million people took part in the symbolic vote. Virtually all voted in favor of the proposal to establish unemployment benefits of \$380 a month for heads of households, plus \$60 for each school-age child. CTA leaders are asking Congress to enact the measure.

The street protests and marches were met with police repression in several cities. In some cases, street battles erupted when the workers defended themselves. In Neuquén the cops unleashed tear gas and rubber bullets on a demonstration of 6,000 state workers. Demonstrators trashed several government buildings and automatic teller machines.

Some 800 rail workers at Ferrexpresso Pampeano in Buenos Aires province went on strike December 17 demanding payment of back wages from November. The next day the bosses gave in to the unionists. "This was a display of solidarity at a time when it isn't easy to strike and when workers face

getting fired. Nevertheless, the strike was solid," said union official Omar Maturano, the Buenos Aires daily *Clarín* reported.

The surge of protests comes as the Argentine government seeks to meet the demands of the IMF and wealthy bondholders in imperialist countries by shifting the burden of the crisis onto the backs of workers and farmers.

In an attempt to win the confidence of foreign banks and investors, the Argentine minister of the economy, Domingo Cavallo, announced December 17 a proposal to slash \$10 billion in social spending as part of the 2002 national budget plan. He also threatened more cuts in wages and pensions of state workers—already cut by 13 percent—if the government does not "balance the budget."

On December 5 the IMF suspended the disbursement of a \$1.3 billion installment of a previously approved \$22 billion loan, demanding the government adopt a national budget that meets the approval of the international creditors. To appease the IMF, Cavallo eliminated a tax break for businesses, hoping to make an additional \$4 billion available for debt payments.

In an admission of its de facto default on the debt, the de la Rúa administration promised that the December payments of more than \$900 million would be made as soon as the IMF released the funds. Nonetheless, interest payments on bonds totaling \$121 million came due December 14–19 and were not paid.

Unprecedented joblessness

While the bondholders complain they are not getting their promised billions in debt payments, for millions of working people in Argentina conditions are at the breaking point.

The official unemployment rate—which undercounts joblessness—now reaches 18.3 percent. In the Greater Buenos Aires area, the main industrial center, four out of 10 workers are unemployed or only work a few hours. In October government officials reported that nearly 5 million people in the country are unemployed or underemployed.

As unemployment has risen, per capita income has fallen by 14 percent since the recession began four years ago. Some 14 million of the 36 million inhabitants of Argentina live below the official poverty line today.

In mid-December, crowds of unemployed workers and their families in Rosario,

Mendoza, and other cities began to gather in front of supermarkets and distribution centers to demand the distribution of food, and in many cases surged into the stores to take food and other goods.

The situation exploded December 19. Thousands of people sacked hundreds of supermarkets and stores in more than 20 cities and towns across northern Argentina. "Entire families, including children, climbed over fences and filled supermarket carts with cooking oil, food and toilet paper," *New York Times* correspondent Clifford Krauss reported, adding that antigovernment demonstrators blocked roads and city streets.

Battle zone in downtown Córdoba

In the industrial city of Córdoba, public employees protesting wage cuts trashed government offices. Riot cops stormed city hall and attacked protesters, while filling the downtown with tear gas and rubber bullets.

"The palm-lined avenues became virtual battle zones, as demonstrators taunted the police by throwing rocks at them," Krauss wrote.

The protests have rocked the capital as well. "By late afternoon the near-anarchy reached downtown Buenos Aires, with police armed with night sticks and tear gas grenades wading into crowds of looters."

Capitalist government officials, living in a different world from the workers being attacked with rubber bullets, dismissed the protests. "The looting is not about hunger," interior minister Ramón Mestre intoned. "They are stealing alcoholic beverages. This is a political matter."

In a run-down shopping district in San Miguel, on the outskirts of greater Buenos Aires, hundreds of people defied a police assault as they broke into food and clothing shops. One unidentified woman shouted, "We don't have any money, we are hungry, and we have to eat!" Police reported that 2,000 people took part in the rebellion.

That afternoon, the government cabinet, stunned by the rebellions, met in emergency session with secret police and top military officers, then announced the state of siege. The measure gives the president wide powers to suspend constitutional rights such as freedom of travel, press, and association, as well as union rights.

At the same time, with tear gas still thick in the air of many cities, de la Rúa released \$7 million in food for impoverished working-class neighborhoods in an effort to undercut the protests.

The opposition Peronist party blamed de la Rúa and his ruling coalition for the crisis. But the government has been able to carry out these policies only with the cooperation of the Peronists, who control Congress and several provincial governments.

Former president Carlos Menem, who just a few weeks ago was facing charges of corruption and only recently was released from house arrest, is back on the political scene trying to negotiate an agreement on the budget proposal between the ruling coalition government and the Peronist Party he represents.

On December 20, Cavallo and the entire cabinet resigned. De la Rúa said he would accept the resignations to clear the way for reaching an agreement with the Peronist opposition.

As the national economy collapses, the government is facing greater pressure to officially devalue the peso—ending the long-standing policy of pegging it to the dollar—or establish the U.S. dollar as the national currency.

Foreign investors are worried that the shock waves of the Argentine financial meltdown will spread to other shaky capitalist economies such as Brazil.

Officials of the imperialist financial institutions, however, have not budged from their insistence that the government come up with a "sustainable" economic program—that is, one that will guarantee continued payments to the bondholders.

"It's clear that the mix of fiscal policy, debt, and the exchange rate regime is not sustainable," declared IMF chief economist Kenneth Rogoff.

The protests erupting across Argentina, however, sent the message that, for millions of working people, what is unsustainable is the massive joblessness, social cutbacks, and police repression they are confronting.

Spanish-language CNN reported from Buenos Aires, "At midnight, thousands of people from different neighborhoods came out spontaneously onto the streets and, noisily banging pots and honking horns, rejected the [government's] economic policies and the state of siege." A huge crowd gathered in front of the presidential palace demanding economic relief and de la Rúa's resignation.

"It's great that Cavallo's gone," said Elena Sicilia, one of the protesters. "But they all have to go. We don't want de la Rúa and we don't want Menem back. We want a fair government of the people."

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—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Reportback from Guadalajara, Mexico, Book Fair. Speakers: Virginia Garza, volunteer at Pathfinder stall at bookfair; Deborah Liatos, Socialist Workers Party, San Francisco garment worker. Fri., Dec. 28, 7:30 pm. 4229 S. Central Avenue. (323) 233-9372.

San Francisco

Recession, Imperialist War, and Social Catastrophe—Why Working People Need to Fight for International Labor Solidarity. Speaker: Sarah Katz, Socialist Workers Party, member, Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees. Fri., Dec. 28, 7:30 pm. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. 3926 Mission Street, San Francisco. (415) 584-2135.

NEW YORK

Brooklyn

Fighting Racism in World War II: The Port Chicago Massacre—Death and Defiance. Fri., Dec. 21, 7:30 pm. 372A 53rd St. (at 4th Ave.) Donation: \$5. Tel: (718) 567-8014.

Garment District

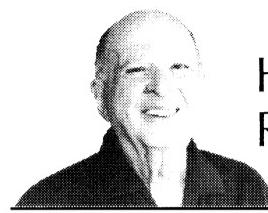
Oppose the U.S. Occupation of Afghanistan. Speaker: Susan Anmuth, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 21, 7:30 pm. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. 545 8th Avenue 14th Floor. Donation: \$4 program, \$5 dinner. (212) 695-7358.

Upper Manhattan

Oppose the Israeli War against the Palestinians. Speaker: Paul Pederson, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 21, 7:30 pm. 599 W. 187th Street, 2nd Floor. Donation: \$5. Tel: (212) 740-4611.

GREAT SOCIETY

Funniest item of the week—The *Wall Street Journal* reported: “FEET FIRST—America has known walks for breast cancer,



Harry
Ring

AIDS, the homeless, etc. But this Sunday [Sorry we're late.—H.R.] human rights advocates from Delhi

to Dayton are putting on their sneakers for a Walk for Capitalism. “Described as ‘the first ever global rally’ to celebrate free trade, globalization, rule of law, profit, free speech, the Walk hopes to mark the first Sunday of each December as Capitalism Day.”

They walked for capitalism?—In the course of a year, 23 million people looked to food kitchens, pantries, and shelters for food.

Please don't eat the clusters—“U.S. radio broadcasts into Afghanistan now include a safety

warning: ‘Air-dropped food parcels are square; unexploded cluster bombs are can-shaped; and both are yellow. So it is important to tell them apart.’”—Reuters dispatch, as reported by *The Progressive*.

Peace on earth, etc.—If you’re looking for a last-minute, sick Xmas gift, check out the police doll being peddled by the Los Angeles Police Protective League. (They try to palm themselves off as a union.) A foot tall, the cop doll is wielding a gun in one hand and a club in the other. On his belt are handcuffs, a flashlight, and pepper spray.

Beefing up la migra—Congress voted an 18 percent increase—\$5.6 billion—for the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

...meanwhile—Congress killed a funding proposal to aid disabled students. The amount denied was nearly two-thirds smaller than the increase showered on the border cops.

The bank repossessed it?—Allegedly, burglars used a forklift to break into a Los Angeles-area supermarket and hauled off an ATM machine. The machine was not

bolted down.

Slam dunk—California medical regulators cracked down on James Andrews, a San Jose doctor who allegedly gave diluted or expired flu shots to 1,000 hotel workers. The Medical Board said that because of his “multiple extreme departures” from standard medical practice, he was barred from dealing in flu shots.

Season's greetings—Merry marxmas and a busy revolutionary new year to all. With special greetings to new readers and new Young Socialists. Welcome aboard.

Steelworkers combat lockout in Oregon

BY DAVID FERGUSON

ALBANY, Oregon—Since September 4 some 694 Steelworkers here have been fighting against a lockout by Wah Chang Industries.

“The members are strong and determined, they are hanging in,” stated Wayne Boyd, president of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 6163. The unionists had been working without a contract for almost a year when the company locked them out in response to a strike notice.

The workers are maintaining picket lines around the clock and receive nearly constant honks of support from passersby.

“Health care is the big issue,” Boyd told the *Militant*. “The company wants retirees to pay 50 percent of all future increases in health-care costs, in addition to raising the premiums to \$122 per month.” About 400 members of the local will become eligible to retire under the next contract.

“The tier system is a problem for us,” continued Boyd. “It takes a new worker three years to get the full wage for the job they are doing. They can be working alongside others doing the same job and yet get paid several dollars per hour less.”

“We lost a lot in the last negotiations: The tier system, three holidays, and some vacation pay. We want to get a little of it back. The company had promised to return some of what we gave up but now is breaking that promise,” said Boyd. “We are fighting for there to be good union jobs here for future generations.”

Wah Chang, which means Great Development, was founded by a Chinese immigrant, Stephen Yih. He sold the company to Teledyne corporation, which in turn sold it to Allegheny Technologies. This is the first contract negotiations with Allegheny. The plant produces specialty metals such as zirconium, titanium, and others. Many of the



Locked-out workers at picket site at Wah Chang Industries in Albany, Oregon. The unionists have been working without a contract for almost a year.

machined parts they make are used in aircraft engines. General Electric and Pratt and Whitney are among its biggest customers.

The walls at the union hall are covered with news articles about their strike. Included among these is an article about the recent strike by Machinists at Pratt and Whitney in Connecticut.

Workers at Wah Chang face many hazards on the job, including inhalation of the dust, low flash points of some metals, and explosions in the smelting and forging operations. One union member recently died of cancer, and another had an operation for

the disease. Boyd said the local has been trying to help them and others by paying extra insurance premiums under COBRA, the federal law on continued medical insurance after people lose their jobs.

Other USWA locals working for Allegh-

Strikers at Titan Tire approve new contract in Mississippi

BY SUSAN LAMONT

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama—Members of United Steelworkers of America Local 303L voted December 9 to accept a proposed settlement in their nearly three-and-a-half-year strike against Titan Tire in Natchez, Mississippi. The vote was 122 to 35 to ratify.

After the local turned down an earlier proposal in October, improvements were made in the pact explained strike activist Willie Evans in a December 10 telephone interview.

“We won improvements in pay, in the pension plan, and [Titan Tire CEO Maurice] Taylor agreed to release monies he has been holding since the strike started,” Evans said. This includes “vacation pay and 401 (k)

money belonging to the members.” Mandatory overtime was reduced to 12 hours per week, with every other weekend off—“still too much,” Evans noted.

“Union maintenance men went back into the plant today,” Evans said, to begin getting the plant into shape to restart. Production workers are to begin returning to work, doing janitorial tasks at janitors’ pay for the time being. It is unclear, however, when the plant will actually restart production. After running the plant for several years with scab labor, the company idled it earlier this year. The new contract says that Titan must leave equipment in the plant for 12 months. Workers who are not called back will continue to get strike benefits for the time being.

The new agreement also allows the local to continue with unfair labor practices charges that are still pending against Titan Tire, rather than dropping them, as the earlier contract proposed.

The strike against Titan Tire in Natchez began in September 1998, a few months after workers at Titan’s plant in Des Moines, Iowa, walked out. The union members fought what they saw as an attempt by the company to break the union and impose drastic workplace changes. Workers at the Des Moines plant ratified a final agreement in September.

“We’re not 100 percent satisfied,” said Evans, “but this was about our best shot.”

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

December 31, 1976

OCEANSIDE, Calif.—Three hundred people jammed into the Balderrama Community Center here December 14 to demand the release of fourteen imprisoned Black marines at Camp Pendleton.

The marine base, the largest on the West Coast, is located in this small city, thirty miles north of San Diego.

The crowd, mainly from Oceanside’s Black community, heard speeches by local Black leaders and by Rev. Jesse Jackson, head of the Chicago-based civil rights group Operation PUSH.

The Pendleton Fourteen, as the jailed marines are now called, are accused of conspiracy to commit murder. After a series of racist provocations by the Ku Klux Klan on the base, the fourteen Black soldiers—the marine brass allege—attacked what they believed to be a Ku Klux Klan party.

“When the Klan threatens us in Oceanside, we should get excited not just in Oceanside, but everywhere,” Jackson said.

“We must mobilize...to keep these fourteen men from being railroaded,” Jackson said. “The military has the responsibility to exonerate these men.”

Jackson charged that marine officials are trying to keep the issue of the Klan’s racist provocations out of the military trial of the Pendleton Fourteen.

When the fourteen Black marines were first arrested, Pendleton authorities portrayed the attack on the white soldiers as totally unprovoked. The San Diego Urban League later looked into the arrests and uncovered information about the Klan’s anti-Black harassment on the base.

THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

NEW YORK, N.Y.

FIVE (5) CENTS

December 31, 1951

The year 1951 opened with the promulgation of the government wage-freeze last January, and closed with a challenge to that wage-freeze on the part of over a million steel workers. Between these two events came the unprecedented resignation of all labor members from government war agencies and the calling of a national United Labor Conference in Washington on March 21.

Thus while 1951 was not marked by great labor strike struggles, events of the year clearly foreshadow the coming social crisis in America.

The issue of the year has been the wage-freeze. The workers have not been willing to reconcile themselves to any freeze on wages while prices and taxes mount skyward. The union officialdom has also opposed the wage-freeze, reflecting, in this stand, the sentiments of the ranks. However, the Murray-Green policy of supporting the Truman administration and its war program has prevented the unions from developing a real offensive against discriminatory wage controls. The politics of the union leaders have repeatedly clashed with the needs of the ranks.

The government wage-freeze order was made effective on Jan. 25, 1951. Under this order, all contracts between unions and employers signed after that date were to be reviewed by the Wage Stabilization Board. Wage increases were to be restricted to 10% above the pay level of Jan. 10, 1950.

The Truman administration indicated that it intends to hold workers’ wages within this limit, despite the rise of both prices and profits to the highest levels in history.

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Cancel Argentina's debt!

Working people should join in solidarity with workers and farmers in Argentina who have erupted in protests across that South American nation. In face of record unemployment and brutal cutbacks in living standards imposed by the capitalist government to make payments on Argentina's foreign debt, workers are standing up to say: We are not willing to keep paying out of our sweat and blood to bail out the government and the imperialist investors!

This catastrophe is not the result of mistaken policies, but rather the natural consequence of how capitalism works in the imperialist epoch, in which the world is divided between a handful of industrialized powers and a large majority of oppressed nations.

The foreign debt is not a relationship between equals. Washington and other imperialist powers—through their control of capital, world markets, and technology, as well as their military superiority—set the rules and impose their exploitative terms on semicolonial countries. Unequal terms of trade mean that prices for agricultural goods and natural resources—the main source of revenue for Third World nations—tend to decline while prices for the industrial equipment they purchase from imperialist countries tend to increase, forcing the semicolonial countries deeper into debt.

Argentina, like nations throughout Latin America, Asia, and Africa, is being bled dry by massive payments to the banks and bondholders in the United States and other imperialist countries. Working people there have been forced to pay tens of billions in interest payments, yet the foreign debt continues to grow—it now stands at a staggering \$132 billion. The foreign debt setup is simply a form of pillage through which the capitalist families in the imperialist countries suck massive amounts of wealth out of the semicolonial world and into their own pockets.

The Argentine capitalist class, currently represented by the de la Rúa administration, is unable and unwilling to defend the interests of working people. Its only solution is to tie its fortunes ever more tightly to its imperialist

masters. The international creditors demand their tribute, and the government has tried to pay it by complying with their demands to slash pensions and wages of state employees, cut other social programs, weaken union rights, raise taxes, partially freeze bank accounts, and hold back public employees' paychecks in the provinces for months.

The Argentine government now faces bankruptcy and in practice has defaulted on its unpayable debt. This financial meltdown threatens to have repercussions throughout the increasingly volatile world capitalist economy, from Brazil to Turkey.

Similarly intolerable conditions are creating social turmoil throughout Latin America, from the Dominican Republic to Bolivia. Washington's response has been not only to demand cutbacks and continued debt payments. It is also anticipating the coming resistance of working people by increasing its military presence in the region. Through its "Andean Initiative"—previously called "Plan Colombia"—the U.S. military is expanding its intervention in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and other countries under the guise of "the war on drugs." And today Washington is even evoking the specter of "Islamic terrorism" in the so-called Triple Border—where Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina meet—to send U.S. military forces to those countries to conduct "antiterrorism" training—near some of the centers of recent working-class struggles in northern Argentina.

The U.S. rulers are correctly worried that the resistance by working people in Argentina today will inspire workers and farmers who face similar conditions throughout the continent, from Ecuador to the Dominican Republic.

The most important solidarity that working people in the United States can offer is to join with fellow fighters internationally to demand the unconditional cancellation of Argentina's foreign debt—and the entire Third World debt. Such a fight can strengthen the possibilities for collaboration by workers across national borders on related fronts: from the fight to demand jobs for all, to the defense of immigrant workers.

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

A crack in the wall of the U.S. rulers' determination to execute Mumia Abu-Jamal appeared with U.S. District Judge William Yohn's decision to throw out the death sentence imposed on Mumia Abu-Jamal. The ruling marks a victory for opponents of capital punishment and all defenders of workers' rights, and registers the impact of the international campaign on his behalf. The judge's decision also reflects the blows dealt to the U.S. rulers' efforts to use state-sponsored executions as a weapon of class terror against working people.

Supporters of democratic rights need to build on this victory to demand a new trial for Abu-Jamal, urge that he be freed immediately, and condemn the judge's decision to uphold the frame-up murder conviction.

Over the course of two decades of speaking out against the brutal conditions in U.S. prisons and on behalf of hundreds of thousands of toilers who find themselves behind bars, Abu-Jamal has become an emblem of the struggle for Black rights, for justice against frame-ups, and against state-sanctioned murder—including on-the-spot executions by killer cops. On two occasions, execution dates set by former Pennsylvania governor and now Homeland Security chief Thomas Ridge for the death row inmate were beaten back by protests and the stepped-up working-class resistance to the bosses' assaults on working people.

As the U.S. rulers have dramatically expanded the use of the death penalty, wider layers of working people in the United States have begun to reject the rationalizations and right of the government to execute people. As workers and farmers resist employer and government assaults, it is easier to see the inherent class bias of the death penalty's use; the workings of the racist police and justice system that puts a higher percentage of people of color on death row; and the fact that frame-ups of workers and

farmers are the norm under capitalism, putting completely innocent people on death row.

The U.S. big-business media has noted the waning support for the death penalty—a trend that is aided by fights by working people facing execution who have exposed their trials as a sham. One Supreme Court justice admitted that among dozens of death row inmates whose cases appeared before the High Court, not one received adequate legal representation.

In addition, Washington's imperialist rivals in Europe are scandalizing the grisly U.S. death chamber production line. In this way they try to paint themselves as more civilized and a better option for working people around the world. Official capital punishment has been outlawed or suspended in virtually every country of Europe, while executions on the street, death on the job, and other forms of capital punishment against working people continue apace.

One aspect of the imperialist assault on working people over the past months has been to use the "terrorism" scam to recoup some of the ground the U.S. rulers have lost on the death penalty. Using the events around September 11, the rulers are making preparations to impose a death sentence on Zacarias Moussaoui, a Moroccan man accused of conspiracy to commit terrorist acts. They are pressing full steam ahead despite their acknowledgment in the media that no evidence links him to the attack on the World Trade Center, and that he had been held in prison since August—weeks before the attacks. And they hold the option of using military tribunals—virtual kangaroo courts—to impose the death penalty on those hauled before them.

Opponents of the death penalty, along with all working people, can use this victory to press forward in the fight for a new trial for Abu-Jamal and to renew the demands: Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the death penalty!

Socialists chart next steps

Continued from Page 9

YS and SWP. I and a friend want to become revolutionaries," she said.

During the Red Weekend, Stone worked on filing and putting the *Militant*'s photo negatives in notebooks to make them more accessible for use by the staff. She "liked seeing people working together toward a common goal" and definitely wanted to pursue getting more involved. Being part of the activities "makes you want to read more," Stone said.

Robert Meyer, a 23-year-old YS member who works at a care facility in Omaha, Nebraska, said he traveled to New York for the Red Weekend because "I wanted to work with other comrades, other revolutionists. I wanted the experience of working with everybody, learning different skills, leadership responsibilities, and taking responsibility to get a job done. We all led together to finish our goal."

Meyer remarked that he "was anticapitalist for a long time but I didn't know about socialism until I met the SWP. I learned you have to be part of a broad organization that includes education of party members." Meyer said he went to Cuba as part of the Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange held this year in Havana, which "helped me to visualize socialism and the untapped power of human beings."

Another participant in the two days of voluntary labor, Louis Turner, who traveled from Charlotte, North Carolina, said, "I wanted to be part of helping in the restructuring of the Pathfinder printshop and getting a chance to work with others." Turner, a 24-year-old who works in a plant assembling computer parts, said he was looking forward to reading the new book by Cuban general Victor Dreke, *From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution*.

Youth condemn imperialism

BY ANNE HARTE
AND JACK WILLEY

ATHENS, Greece—An international seminar on "Imperialism and Terrorism" took place here December 19 as part of the activities around the General Council meeting of the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY). Some 36 organizations from 27 countries are represented at the WFDY meeting. Delegates condemned the U.S.-led imperialist war on Afghanistan and threats of similar actions against Iraq, Somalia, and other countries. They called on the youth of the world to organize street demonstrations and other public protest actions.

The seminar was opened by Harchand Singh, general secretary of WFDY, who pointed to the hypocrisy of the U.S. government, "which has aided the Contras (in their war against the Nicaraguan revolution in the 1980s) and anti-Cuban terrorist organizations, and which uses economic sanctions and blockades." Other speakers included representatives of the World Peace Council and the Movement for Peoples' Liberties and Solidarity, both based in Greece, and representatives from the five regions that make up WFDY.

Paulus Ilonga Kapia, secretary general of the SWAPO Youth League in Namibia, pointed to the role of the imperialist powers of the United States, Britain, France, Belgium, and Portugal in siphoning tremendous wealth from the natural resources of Africa. "There are many social evils bred by imperialism, which continues to exploit the natural resources of Africa," he said. "Africa remains rich, but with poor people."

Kapia condemned Washington's threats of war against Somalia and called on the meeting to "condemn the actions by the United States against Afghanistan, Palestine, Somalia, and others to come." This is part of the imperialists' long-term plan to recolonize the world, he said.

"After African countries won our independence—most of us through national liberation movements—the imperialists came back, using the IMF [International Monetary Fund] and World Bank, putting our countries in great debt," Kapia told the meeting. "The more we borrow the more we have to pay back. We've become debt slaves."

Julio Martínez, second secretary of the Union of Young Communists of Cuba (UJC), reviewed the 40-year history of U.S. aggression against the Cuban Revolution and support for counterrevolutionary groups operating from U.S. soil. "This has included bombs in hotels, over 600 orchestrated assassination attempts on Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro, and a trade and financial blockade for four decades," he said. Martínez explained that the UJC opposed the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon and opposes Washington's war in Afghanistan and predatory moves against other countries.

Several speakers at the symposium pointed to the attacks on democratic rights in the United States, Germany, Greece, Cyprus, and other countries that have been carried out by their respective governments under the pretext of fighting terrorism.

A statement addressing the most recent U.S.-backed Israeli attacks against the Palestinian people, adopted by the WFDY General Council, was read at the meeting. The statement called for support for "the just struggle of the Palestinian people until the final victory."

Mexico book fair

Continued from Page 11

finder, participated in a joint press conference. Valdés presented Tricontinental's new title: *Equality and Social Participation Of Women in Mozambique* by Vitoria Afonso Langa de Jesús, and Madrid presented Pathfinder's new Spanish edition of *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* by Thomas Sankara.

"These books are necessary to incorporate African women into the world," said Valdés. "They speak to the best that the continent has to offer. Prejudices are prevalent when we speak of Africa and women of colonial countries," she said. "This is an important moment; we are speaking of liberation at this point in history."

Madrid quoted Sankara's words to illustrate how women participated in giving life to the 1983–87 revolution in Burkina Faso.

A press conference on the final day of the fair was organized to announce that Cuba will be the featured country in 2002. Fair president Raul Padilla shared a platform with Ismael González, the vice minister of culture for the Republic of Cuba, Iroel Sanchez, the head of the Cuban Book Institute, and others.

"Our country is ready to amply reciprocate for receiving such an honor," said Cuban government representative González. "We gladly accept the opportunity to have this special space to put forward our ideas, our culture, and our reality. We will share with Latin America our truths and our beliefs in an exchange that will enrich us all."

"We will involve the Cuban literary world and culture, from dance to theater," said Sanchez. "We will be here in force with a sample of our music and our art, along with the best of our national literature."

Francisco Picado and Deborah Liatos are packinghouse workers in St. Paul, Minnesota, and San Leandro, California, respectively. Hilda Cuzco contributed to this article.

U.S. capitalism built on slaughter of Indians

Printed below is an excerpt from *Genocide against the Indians—Its Role in the Rise of U.S. Capitalism* by George Novack. This pamphlet is one of Pathfinder's December Books of the Month. The books, listed below, are newly reissued with improved type, formatting, and graphics. Copyright © 1970 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY GEORGE NOVACK

Those who were driven across the Atlantic [to the Americas] by religious and political persecution were a minority. For the majority, the lust for aggrandizement and the greed for personal gain were among the prime passions actuating the Europeans. It was these material motives, more powerful than wind or wave, that propelled the first Europeans overseas and then inevitably brought them into collision with the aboriginal inhabitants.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

The conquerors came as robbers and enslavers; they stayed as colonizers and traders. America had belonged to the Indian tribes both by hereditary right and by life-and-death need to maintain themselves and perpetuate their kind upon the tribal territories. But the tribes wanted to hold the land for different purposes and on different terms than the whites.

The Europeans aimed to acquire the land for themselves or for some sovereign or noble who held title for their country. The newcomers needed land, not simply for hunting, trapping, and fishing, but for extensive agriculture, for lumbering, for settlements and trading centers, for commerce and manufacture—in a phrase, for private exploitation on an expanding scale.

Thus, regardless of their wishes, the Indians and Europeans were sharply counterposed to each other by virtue of their contradictory economic needs and aims. The Indian could maintain his economy with its

primitive communistic institutions and customs, its crude division of labor between the sexes, and its tribal ties of blood kinship only by keeping the white men at bay. The newcomers could plant their settlements and expand their economic activities only by pressing upon the Indian tribes and snatching their territories. This antagonism, flowing from their diametrically opposing systems of production, governed the dealings between red men and white from their first contacts.

The ways and means by which the natives were enslaved, dispossessed, and exterminated cannot be set forth here in detail. The pattern of robbery, violence, debauchery, and trickery was fixed by the Spaniards as early as the landings of Columbus. In their lust for gold Columbus and his men depopulated Hispaniola. Through overwork, abuse, starvation, despair, and disease, the original population of the island dwindled from 300,000 in 1492 to an actual count of 60,000 in 1508. Only a remnant of 500 survived by 1548....

Hypocrisy of capitalist rulers

In their catalogue of crimes against humanity, the spokesmen for capitalism include the expropriation of property without "just compensation," the use of violence to overturn established regimes, and the resort to extralegal measures. They add, as the crime of crimes, the extermination of entire populations, for which the term "genocide" has recently been coined. These self-proclaimed humanitarians ascribe such aims above all to "Marxist" and "Communist" devils. In contrast they hold up the angelic respect for property rights, love of peace, regard for law and order, preference for gradual change by democratic consent, and other virtues presumably inculcated by American "free enterprise."

This is a handy set of principles to justify the capitalist regime while defaming its opponents. But all these principles have little application to the conduct of the bourgeoisie in American history. They have been honored, if at all, more in the breach than in the observance.

Historians fired by zeal to indict the op-

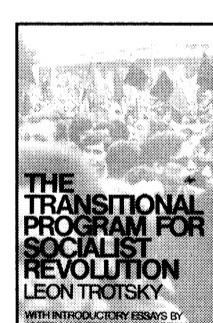
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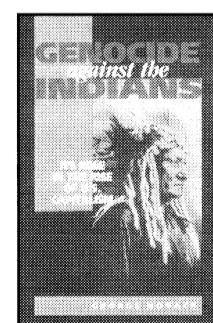


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Sitting Bull (c.1831–1890), leader of Sioux people who refused to be driven onto reservation and resisted U.S. government attacks against his people.

ponents of capitalism for these offenses should first direct their attention to the ancestors of contemporary American capitalism. No class in American history invaded the property rights of others more ruthlessly, employed violence so readily, and benefited so extensively by revolutionary actions as has the American bourgeoisie on its road to power.

The precursors of the monopolists acquired their property by expropriating the Indians, the British crown along with its Loyalist lackeys, and the slaveholders, not to mention their continued stripping of the small farmers and self-employed workers. They effected these dispossession of other people's property not simply by peaceful, legal, or democratic means, but in extremely violent, high-handed, and militaristic ways. Wherever they could not get what they wanted after by bargaining or money, they took by main force or direct action.

The conquest of the Indians, as we have seen, takes its place in this series of events as the earliest and crassest case of the rapacity, ferocity, and duplicity with which the bourgeois forces smashed the impediments on the way to their objectives. They themselves committed the supreme crime they falsely attribute to the aims of revolutionary socialists. The extermination of the In-

dian was the outstanding example of "genocide" in modern American history—and it was the first rung in the ladder by which the bourgeoisie climbed to the top.

'Wars of extermination'

The transmission of the continent into their hands was not accomplished by peaceful agreements. It is common knowledge that virtually every treaty made with the Indians for over four hundred years was broken by the architects of the American nation. By brute force, by the most perfidious deeds, by wars of extermination, they settled the question of who was to own and occupy the continent and to rule it. The treatment of the Indians exemplifies to what lengths the owners of private property can—and will—go in promoting their material interests.

The methods by which the white invaders disposed of the Indian problem had far-reaching results. Ancient Indian society was shattered and eradicated and powerful masters placed over them and over North America. The main social substance of that sweeping change consisted in the conversion and division of tribal property in land, owned in common and cooperatively used, into private property. This continent passed from the loose network of tribal communities into the hands of kings, landed proprietors, planters, merchants, capitalists, small farmers, and town dwellers who directed and composed the new society.

The conflict between the red man and the white is usually represented as essentially racial in character. It is true that their mutual antagonism manifested itself and was carried on by both sides under the guise of racial hatred. But their war to the death was at bottom a social struggle, a battle for supremacy between two incompatible systems of production, forms of property, and ways of life. Like all profound social struggles the scramble for the sources and acquisition of wealth was at its root. In this case, the chief prize was individual ownership and "free" disposition of the land and its products.

These material stakes account for the obdurateness of the conflict which persisted through four centuries and for the implacable hostility displayed by white settlers of all nationalities toward the Indians of all tribes. This was also responsible in the last analysis for the impossibility of any harmony or enduring compromise between the two. One or the other had to yield and go under.

LETTERS

Canadian-style 'justice'

A co-worker in the aerospace factory where I work approached me last week and asked, "Do you want to know how bad the new police state in Canada is becoming?" He then told me what happened to the father of a family that recently immigrated to Canada from Peru. He and his wife have befriended this family.

The man had gone to a bank machine in his neighborhood to withdraw some money. As he was leaving the machine, he was jumped by two, large plainclothes men. They threw him onto the concrete sidewalk, face down, and jumped on him, pinning him to the ground. Two more beefcakes joined in the assault. They removed his identification papers from his pockets, looked through them, and then stood up. "Sorry," they said, "looks like we have the wrong person." They gave him a business card, identifying themselves as RCMP officers (Canada's federal police), and then walked away.

The man stumbled home and an ambulance was called. The hospital diagnosed him with several cracked ribs, lacerations to his face and other parts of the body, and possible internal injuries. He is looking for legal help, but in the meantime cannot return to his job as a drywall installer. "This is what happened all the time in Portugal before 1974," my co-worker recalled. He grew up there. In 1974, a popular revolution overthrew a fascist dictatorship that had been in power for many decades.

Roger Annis
Vancouver, British Columbia

Railroad retirement system

For many months now, officials of the United Transportation Union, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, and the other railroad unions, have waged a loud campaign promoting the "Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act of

2001." This bill, which has been approved by wide margins in Congress, would provide for modest improvement in rail workers' pensions and reductions in the age of retirement. It would allow money placed into the Railroad Retirement system to be put in stocks and bonds on the private capital market.

Such a program ties rail workers' retirement funds directly to the ups and downs of the stock market and the capitalist economy as a whole. The California Public Employees Retirement System (CalPERS), one of the largest pension funds in the country, is reported to have lost around \$40 million from its holdings in the collapsed energy company Enron, for example. The California teachers' retirement fund lost around \$20 million from Enron stock. While direct investment in Enron stock constituted a small percentage of CalPERS's huge holdings, it points to the vulnerability of workers' pension funds as the capitalist economy goes into recession. Workers' pension funds today constitute enormous sums of money available for use by the capitalists. Since 1993, CalPERS had put up more than \$400 million to fund various Enron energy development projects, from which, according to one pension fund official, they were lucky to get out of without losing money. The railroad retirement scheme now before Congress simply hands billions of dollars over to Wall Street banks and investment houses to use as they see fit.

Jim Altenberg
San Francisco, California

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Hundreds protest fascists in Sweden

BY DANIEL AHL

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—Chanting, “No fascists on our streets!” and “Don’t let the hatred grow!” some 850 people marched from Rönninge to Salem December 8 in a countermobilization organized by Network against Racism to take place just hours before a march by ultrarightists here.

“I live in Salem, and I don’t want any racism here,” Andreas Olsson, 20, told the *Militant* at a rally prior to the antifascist march. Pointing to a well-known day of mobilization by rightists during the 1990s, Olsson said, “I don’t want there to be another November 30 here.” Working people and youth were reminded last year of the fascist threat when a 17-year-old skinhead was killed, providing ultrarightists with an opportunity to mobilize their forces nationally.

Prior to December 8, the Conservative Party-led community administration distributed leaflets to households, urging parents to “watch over the whereabouts of their children.” During the march to Salem two women in their 40s said jokingly, “Of course, we do what the administration is telling us.” Afterward the police downplayed the action, telling the press only 400 to 500 people participated.

“I’m disappointed that so few people came, but I think most people who live here are against these skinheads coming here,” said Mohamed Abdula, 18. He and his friends Amir Mahdi, 19, Jens Kristensen, 16, and Robin Berg denounced the efforts by Salem capitalist politicians to discourage participation in the antifascist march.

“A week ago,” Mahdi said, “a skinhead at the pizzeria told me, ‘Next Saturday, you’ll be dead.’ When I asked him if he wanted to fight, he didn’t dare to do his own. These people have cowardice written in the forehead.”

“They say immigrants are criminals,” Abdula continued. “Look at the guy organizing their march—his list is full.”

The organizer of the ultrarightist march, Robert Vesterlund, is a central figure in the Swedish ultraright. In 1999, after being



More than 800 people marched in a countermobilization against a fascist demonstration in Sweden December 8. Hours after antifascist protest ultrarightists held a march that was protected by 300 cops.

elected to the local leadership of the Retail Workers Union, he was exposed as a fascist by unionist Björn Söderberg, who worked in the same warehouse. Vesterlund was expelled from the union. A month later, on October 12, Söderberg was shot and killed

in his home by two associates of Vesterlund.

Following union-sponsored actions that mobilized some 30,000 people in 20 towns and cities—close to 10,000 in Stockholm alone—Söderberg’s killers were convicted of first-degree murder charges. The district

attorney dismissed the charges that Vesterlund had ordered the murder.

“There are not many immigrants here,” Berg explained, “because the Salem community administration broke loose from that of Botkyrka,” a neighboring community with a large immigrant population. “That’s also why the skinheads come here,” said Kristensen.

“They come to Salem in gangs as often as they can,” Mahdi concluded. “I joined this march because I want to live here without being chased by these cowards.”

Hours after the antifascist march some 1,000 ultrarightists marched along the same route, protected by 300 cops in riot gear who sealed off the city’s streets. The fascists called their action a “march of sorrow,” continuing to use the death of the rightist skinhead as a pretext for their antiworker mobilization. The big-business media aided this fraud by also using the “march of sorrow” when referring to the action. The Sweden Democrats, the main fascist outfit fielding candidates in the

2002 parliamentary election, did not officially participate in the action but wrote favorably about it in their paper.

Daniel Ahl is a member of the Industrial Union in Stockholm, Sweden.

London office cleaners fight layoffs

BY YONATAN MOSQUERA

LONDON—Night cleaners employed by the Lancaster Cleaning Company are campaigning in defense of their right to work. Twenty-three Lancaster employees were assigned to the offices of Enron in the Victoria area of London when the U.S.-based power company declared bankruptcy. The cleaning company reacted to the Enron bankruptcy by sacking [firing] all 23.

“They hoped that we would be scared because of our status as immigrants and just accept the sackings,” said José, who asked that his last name not be used by the media.

“Now the company wants to wash its hands of the whole matter. But we have rights. We are employed by Lancaster as cleaners. It’s not our fault that Enron went down. Lancaster should provide us other cleaning jobs.” The bulk of the cleaners are immigrants, mostly from Latin America.

José was one of a number of workers who, having previously read *Perspectiva Mundial*, contacted the *Militant* to publicize their case. Another worker, Beto, described what happened on the night of the sackings.

“We were working our regular 9:00 p.m. to 5:30 a.m. shift,” Beto said. “At about four

in the morning the cleaning company’s representative arrived at the Enron site allegedly to supervise the security system’s cameras, hoping that he could find an excuse for disciplining someone. This is an old tactic used by the company to intimidate us. After he found nothing, he called us to a meeting to inform us that we were to lose our jobs.”

“The bosses knew about the Enron developments long before but waited until the last moment, hoping that the workers wouldn’t have enough time to respond,” explained José. “But people were very angry. When told to go home, we all refused to leave until we received a signed statement that we would be relocated to another job.”

“The Lancaster manager’s response was to threaten to call the cops,” José said. “It was a ‘if-you-move-I-shoot’ gunman’s tactic. After an hour and a half, he started to carry out the threat to call the cops and we decided to leave.”

If Lancaster thought the matter was over, they underestimated the workers. Later that morning, 18 of the fired cleaners gathered at the Lancaster company’s headquarters in Keston, Kent. They were able to talk with senior managers but got the same push off.

Later that night the workers organized a street meeting to map out the next stages in their fight for employment rights. “Do we need a trade union to take up questions like this?” asked another cleaner, Ricardo. The cleaners, he explained earn £5.25 per hour, and receive no premium for either night work or overtime (£1 = US\$1.46). “They treat us like animals. But just because we’re immigrants doesn’t mean we’re not human beings.”

“It’s not unusual for entire crews to be summarily dismissed like we were. The difference this time is that we’ve decided to fight,” José said. “After all, with the economic prospects, alternative work is going to be more difficult to find.”

The workers have visited the Citizens Advice Bureau to find out about their legal rights and are planning a campaign of protests. In response, the company has offered eight of the 23 employees relocation to new jobs. “The eight refused,” said José. “We’re not accepting their divide-and-rule tactics. Everyone should get relocated.”

Yonatan Mosquera is a member of the Young Socialists.

Farmers in Greece rally for a livable income

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN

ATHENS, Greece—“The fight of the farmers is one for survival and will overcome all the problems which the government will put before it,” said Giorgos Patakis, president of the United Federation of Farmers Unions of Larisa, at the farmers rally in Larisa December 10. The protest was one of many that took place throughout the country December 10–12.

In the days leading up to the actions farmers assembled their tractors in villages

throughout northern Greece and much of the rest of the country. Despite heavy rain, snow, and sleet across the country, they descended into provincial capitals and major towns December 10 for rallies and other activities. Rallies on December 12 included one in Karditsa, where cotton farmers were joined by high school students who skipped school in a show of solidarity, and in Larisa, where farmers were joined by the city’s trade union bodies. Several thousand farmers protested not only in the heart of the cotton-producing plain of Thessaly, but also in Thrace, Macedonia, Crete, Lesvos, Boetia, and elsewhere.

The December mobilization were able to build on rallies in November of 10,000 tobacco farmers in Thessaloniki and several thousand cotton farmers in Trikala. Inspired by those successes farmers from a much wider geographic area joined the latest actions. Also, in addition to cotton and tobacco producers, olive farmers, fruit farmers, dairy farmers, and others participated.

The working family farmers are protesting the low prices being offered for their products as well as the cuts in subsidies by the European Union Commission—both factors are drastically pushing down farmers’ income. Combined with the squeeze of rising costs of production and increasing debt owed to banks, many are being pushed off the land.

“They are trying to deceive us for one more time,” one cotton farmer told *Rizospastis* newspaper in response to gov-

ernment promises that it is on the farmers’ side. “We can’t step back because the future of farming people will be decided by our participation in the mobilizations,” he said. The Social Democratic government of PASOK, the Pan Hellenic Socialist Movement, has declared that it will fight to defend farm subsidies in the European Union.

Meanwhile, the minister of agriculture announced that for the year 2002 cotton production quotas will be cut by 10–20 percent. If farmers produce above the quotas they are subject to fines. One of the demands of the working farmers is that fines not be levied against small- and medium-sized producers.

On the island of Lesvos in the eastern Aegean Sea, the December 12 rally by olive farmers was met with police violence. Two cops were injured as well as three protesters. More than 1,000 farmers rallied in front of the Ministry of the Aegean where the police attempted to keep them out. The farmers successfully occupied the lobby of the ministry.

Subsequently, ministry officials launched a red-baiting attack on the farmers blaming Communist Party of Greece activists for the clashes. However, the coordinating committee of the olive growers blamed the violence on the ministry’s decision to have a heavy police presence at the action.

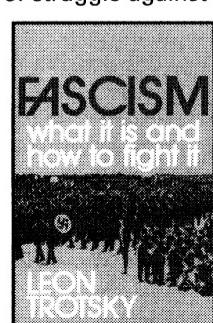
On December 19 representatives of farmers’ groups will meet to discuss further actions. One idea raised by farmers at the Larisa rally is descending with their tractors on Athens after the holidays.

from Pathfinder

Fascism: What It Is and How to Fight It

Leon Trotsky

Writing in the heat of struggle against the rising fascist movement in Europe in the 1930s, Russian communist leader Leon Trotsky examines the origins and nature of fascism and advances, for the first time, a working-class strategy to combat and defeat it. \$4.00



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